

CULT
MOVIES



NO. 12

CULT MOVIES

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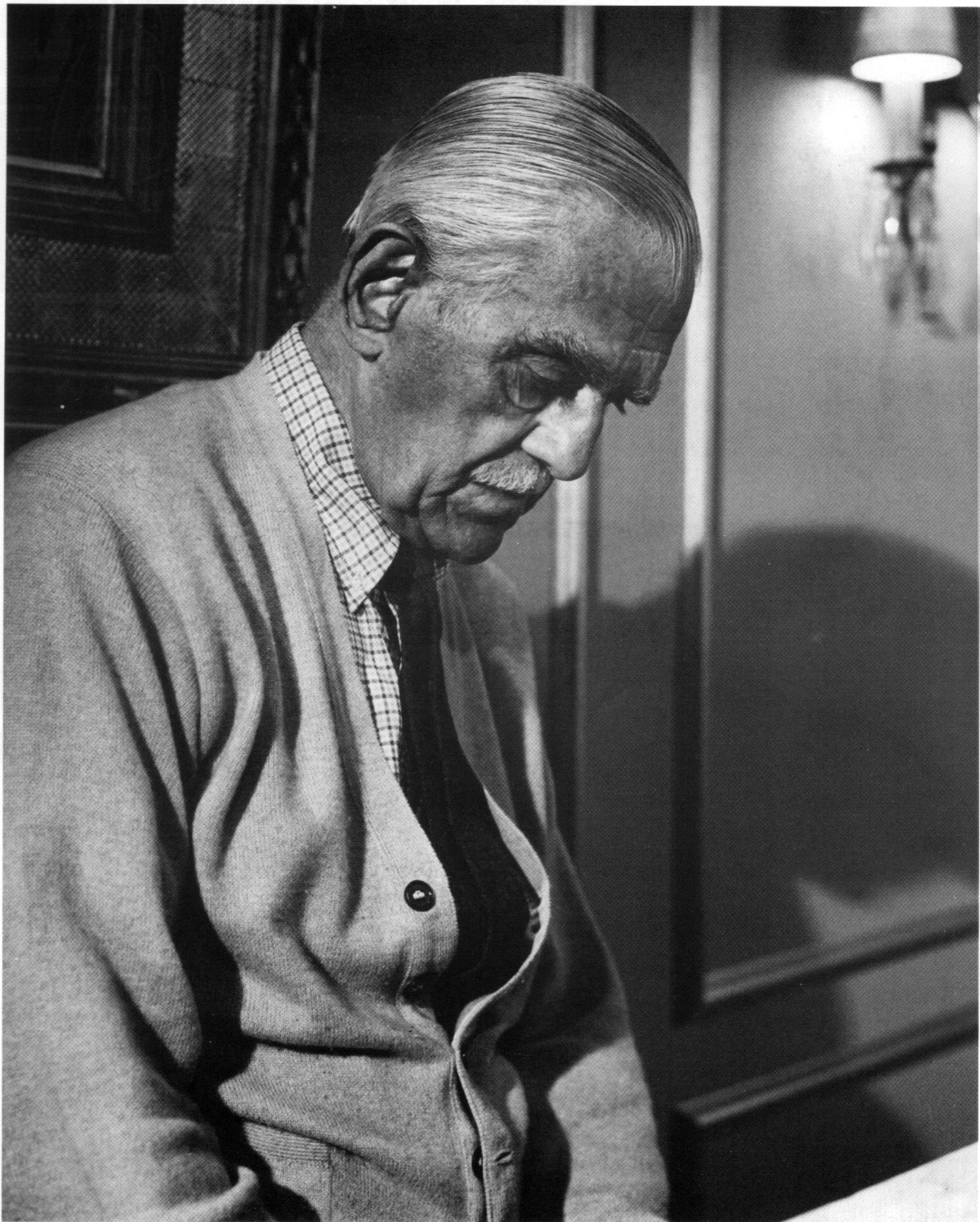
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CULT MOVIES

Issue #12

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This issue dedicated to the people who made *Ed Wood* such a masterpiece: Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski for a wonderful script; Tim Burton for making it in black and white; and Martin Landau for his amazing portrayal of Bela Lugosi.

Special Thanks To:

Jose Mojica Martins, Tim Murphy, Jan Henderson, Dave Friedman, Tom Weaver, Fred Olen Ray, Chris D., Ken Schacter, Lisa Mitchell, Steve Armogida, Conrad Brooks, Morris Vescovi, Ron Borst, Ed & Carolyn Plumb, John & Isabelle Norris, Lee Harris, Jana Wells, Forrest J Ackerman, Lisa Petrucci, Greg Mank, Frank Henenlotter, Guy Tucker, Rudy Minger, Harry Novak, Bryan Senn, Frank J. Dello Stritto, Jim Singer, Ed G. Lousarian, Mario Toland, Michael Brunas, Joe O'Brien, Glenn Damato, Lucy Chase Williams, Spider Subke, Bob Kokai, Eric Hoffman, Charles Heard, Michael F. Blake, Matthew Bradshaw, Stephen Flaccasser, Alexander McGregor, Sara Karloff, Katherine Orrison, Cynthia Lindsay and the artistic genius of Dave Stevens.

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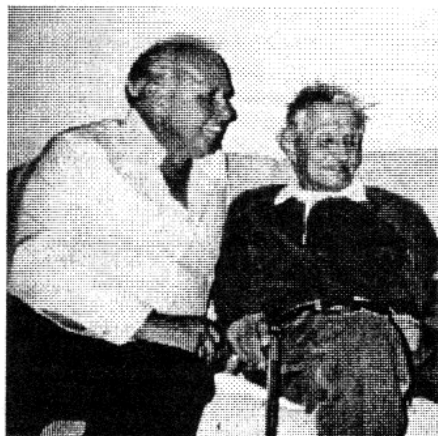
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DEEP INSIDE CULT MOVIES



Conrad Brooks (left) interviews the late Peter Coe one week before his death.

It's not supposed to end that way.

The convention of the movies is that a happy ending is the best kind of ending. And in real life we grow to expect the final resolution to be a neatly wrapped package, a Hollywood style conclusion that leaves everyone feeling real warm inside. It's just good box office.

But for actor Peter Coe there was no happy Hollywood conclusion. I wish things could have been different for him.

Peter Coe was prominent on stage and screen in his youth, and Cult Movies readers will remember Peter from his romantic roles in *House Of Frankenstein* and *The Mummy's Curse*. You may also recall that Peter was a drinking buddy of Edward D. Wood, Jr., and that at one time Ed had a film bio on Bela Lugosi scripted and planned, with Peter Coe slated to portray the part of Lugosi. In later years, when Wood and his wife were evicted from that horrible apartment on Yucca Street, it was Coe who generously took them in, allowing them to live with him until Eddie could get on his feet financially.

That financial stability was never attained. Ed Wood died after being with Coe for one week.

A year ago we interviewed Peter Coe and he spoke of his shock over the death of his friend. "They came from the morgue and put Eddie's body in a garbage bag and hauled him away," Peter cried. "To them he was just more garbage." We printed part of his interview in a previous issue of Cult Movies. Our friend Conrad Brooks, a longtime pal of Peter Coe, came along and interviewed Peter on Camera about Wood's death — an interview we ended up incorporating into the video presentation of Ed Wood's aborted masterpiece, *Hellborn*. A week after we shot the Peter Coe footage, Peter died. He'd been hoping to recover from a serious cancer operation and even talked of doing another film. He knew of the upcoming Tim Burton film about his pal Ed Wood, and I think he would have enjoyed seeing it. I can't help but wonder what he would have thought about Martin Landau's astonishing turn as Lugosi — a role once planned for him.

It seems ironic somehow that Cult Movies ended up shooting the last footage of Peter Coe, and that it wound up being presented with another unrealized Wood film, *Hellborn*.

I just wish I didn't have that memory of the sad, frail, cancer ridden man that Peter Coe had become. His final days were pretty unhappy ones, and it's just not supposed to end that way.

♦♦♦♦

The Shadow was a cult movies subject right up until the very minute when Universal released their new Shadow film this year. Now it'll be a dead issue for years to come.

Actually, I'm glad *The Shadow* was at least as enjoyable as it was, since it could have gotten even further out of control and been a total disaster. But it also could have been so much better...

For 14 years The Shadow project struggled along at Universal. A script by Leslie (Superman) Newman was rewritten several times before being abandoned. Another script by Bob (Back To The Future) Zemeckis and Bob Gale was to have drawn it's main inspiration from the radio version of The Shadow. Walter Gibson, who had created the character and written 283 pulp magazine novels about The Shadow, was especially angry about Universal's delays and indecision. In 1986 he told *Starlog* magazine, "With all the wealth of stuff they had to pick from in The Shadow, you'd think they would have picked something typical of it. Why don't they read my Shiwan Khan stories?"



Ed Wood as one of the many women to be seen in *Hellborn*.

For better or worse, those novels did become the inspiration for Universal's new movie. With "The Golden Master" and again in "Shiwan Khan Returns," both written in 1939, Gibson retrospectively felt he'd reached the peak of The Shadow series, pitting the invisible avenger against a kind of Fu Manchu supercriminal. He believed that a feature film based on these books would be a sure-fire success. The prolific writer died December 6, 1985 at age 88 while recovering from a stroke, and is spared the dismay he might have felt at seeing the final product on the screen. (A bright spot was that Mr. Gibson did live to see a hardcover pairing of these Shiwan Khan novels by Mysterious Press in 1984. He wrote a special introduction to the volume. The availability of these novels renders it nearly pointless to read the *Shadow* movie tie-in paperback that is still lingering on news stands.)

I've been a Shadow fan since the 1960s, when the old radio shows and pulp novels began to resurface to enhance our American Popular Culture. Therefore I went to see the new film the

weekend it opened — and was among the many who felt a bit let down. I was especially disappointed that the haunting, mocking voice of The Shadow just didn't sound otherworldly enough, as it did on the radio. Perhaps there's just too much to the Shadow myth to be able to pull it all together in one film and satisfy everyone's anticipations yet still make the whole thing work.

Too bad. The failure of this film was everybody's loss, and The Shadow won't be a cult hero for quite a while now.

♦♦♦♦

Early in the planning stages of Coffin Joe's first American tour, which occurred in May of this year, I volunteered my guest room for the West Coast half of his visit. We knew it was going to be expensive, bringing the Terror King here from Brazil, and he'd have nearly two weeks to spend here in America. It could get expensive. I told everyone concerned that he'd have no hotel costs here in Hollywood.

Having made this declaration, I at once began having second thoughts. I was watching the classic Coffin Joe films as they were being released by Something Weird Video, and saw this madman of the International Cinema — a fiend, a demon — and I wondered if I might end up with my throat slashed by the Fearful One. I have pets at the house and wondered if dogs or cats were a part of some weird animal sacrifice he might perform at the midnight hour.

I needn't have wasted my thoughts with such foolishness. Although Jose Mojica Marins, alias Coffin Joe, may appear as a huge, devilish, insane creature from another world when he's on the screen, the reality is quite the opposite. Mr. Marins' is a shy, thoughtful gentleman — and a great houseguest. He made the best of two film conventions in Hollywood that could have gone better, he really seemed to enjoy the sights of the town, and he was the most charming guest anyone could bring into their own home.

At one afternoon film festival we got Coffin Joe together with such media luminaries as Harry Novak, Korla Pandit, and Barbara Steele — a seemingly unlikely foursome that got along well together. Mr. Marins speaks only Portuguese; no English. Actually, he is familiar enough with the language to say "Good, good!" when he's happy, and he sounds just like Karloff in *Bride Of Frankenstein* when he says it. Otherwise, he needs a translator, and during most of the trip he kept his interpreter Andre Barcinski with him, to mediate the endless questions and greetings from fans.

I was happy at how well Coffin Joe got along with Korla Pandit. At one point, he said something to Andre, who turned to Mr. Pandit and explained, "Mr. Marins says he enjoys Korla's music and wants you to score all the music for his next film." Pandit beamed with delight and replied, "Tell Mr. Marins that I've long admired his films and would be honored to provide music for his next production!"

Now, you've got to know that these guys were unaware of each other before that day. But each one recognized the personal and show biz appeal in the other and ended up being best pals during the remainder of the day. Coffin Joe, a prolific painter of primitive style, hurried together a colorful art piece as a tribute to Pandit.

The way things sometimes work out in Hollywood, wouldn't it be great if they did end up working on a new film together? With Barbara Steele co-starring and Harry Novak producing???

♦♦♦♦

This month should be designated "Something Weird" month by film fans around the world, for they are releasing some truly astounding titles on VHS at this very moment. Perhaps the most exciting is their release of the American roadshow



Coffin Joe is welcomed to Hollywood by (from left) Korla Pandit, Barbara Steele and Harry Novak.

version of the 1930 French science-fiction epic, *End Of The World*, directed by Abel Gance.

In the film, astronomer Victor Francen (the man who raises the dead in Gance's *Accuse*) announces to the world the arrival of a comet which will strike and destroy the Earth in approximately 30 days. He is both ignored and branded "a traitor" until the comet becomes visible and the world's population promptly goes nuts.

Frank Henenlotter explains about the film, "Originally running some 105 minutes, Harold Auten, the American distributor, cut the film to 54 minutes, added subtitles and a silly prologue with real-life astronomer Clyde Fisher (who says: "There is nothing unchangeable but eternal changeableness...") and released it as a roadshow attraction in 1934. While most of the plot is obviously missing, the spectacle remains. In fact, the film now plays like an insane, visually stunning hour-long montage that builds to a breathtaking climax of distortion and destruction that is utterly dazzling. In its original form *End Of The World* is probably a classic. Even abbreviated, there's still nothing quite like it. A wonderful rarity rescued from oblivion..."

Ron Borst further adds that the German actor Max Shreck (*Nosferatu*) makes an appearance in *End Of The World*. Obviously a "must have" for

film buffs!

On a recent trip to Brazil, Something Weird's Mike Vraney met a contemporary of Coffin Joe's, a filmmaker known as Ivan "The Terror" Cardoso. The films of Cardoso combine the best of horror, sex and gore genres within humorous stories, paying homage to American B-movies and radio serial theatre and pop culture. Something Weird Video is now presenting these (in Portuguese with English sub-titles) for the first time in America. Titles include *Secret Of The Mummy*, *The Seven*

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Vampires, *Nosferatu* In Brazil, and more.

Something Weird is finally getting their complete video catalog to the printers; this catalog has been promised and in the works for over a year. It will be over 100 pages and list around a thousand titles available to the collector — many of them exclusive through Something Weird. Some of their other recent releases of note include *Olga's House Of Shame*, along with the first of the incredible Olga films, *White Slaves Of Chinatown*.

They are also presenting some non-explicit classics of "Mr. Softy", Manuel S. Conde. Filmmaker Conde was born in Cuba (and died in Hollywood

in 1994). He made numerous films since 1958 (and even made nudies right under Fidel Castro's nose!) His first movie *Girls On The Rocks* — a Latin American nudie-cutie was followed by *Calendar Pin-Up Girls*. During the late '60s and early '70s, Conde began venturing into sex and horror (with a bizarre twist!) which eventually led to the more humorous softcore classics he's gained a reputation for, even having filmed the first hardcore feature film starring John Holmes (*Doctor I'm Coming*) and the first softcore Johnny Wadd adventure starring Holmes (*The Danish Connection*.) SWV has 15 Conde titles available at the moment, including the infamous *Deep Jaws* and *Terror At Orgy Castle*. Obviously their new catalog is worth checking out! Look for Something Weird's ads in this issue.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

And while you're leafing through this exciting issue, there are lots of other goodies I know you'll enjoy. Japanese film authority Dave Milner returns with some more exciting interviews with people making the current line of Godzilla films at



Katherine Orrison

Toho.

We also welcome Katherine Orrison with the first in her series of articles on exceptional ladies in the cinema. Ms. Orrison has worked in the animation film industry for 10 years before turning to live-action full time. She has made some 30 films, working at various times in production and as costumer, art director, and set decorator. She has co-authored the book *Lionheart In Hollywood* with Henry Wilcoxon, and is currently writing a book about low-budget filmmaking. We are happy to have Katherine Orrison in our pages.

Lisa Mitchell returns with her tribute to Karloff in his sexiest role, the part of a 3,700-year-old Mummy. Lisa is currently working on a lavish book length tribute to Cecil B. DeMille, plus a series of article for us on unusual films from the 1950s.

Mike Vraney provides us with yet another interview with a prolific exploitation filmmaker, Dan Sonney. Thanks to Vraney for amazing detective work in locating one obscure figure after another and bringing them to light for cult film lovers everywhere.

Soooo, on with the show! Hope you like the issue.

Sincerely,
Michael Copner



LETTERS



Wanted! More readers like Conrad Brooks, Jade East and Ed Lousararian.

Dear Cult Movies,

I was very happy to find your magazine. It is a treat to finally see the long over looked area of films get the coverage it has been due. Exploitation films are just as important as the mainstream films and are often the forerunners of trends in the movies not just imitators.

It's often forgotten that there are British exploitation films. You should give some coverage to these. Films like *The Adventures Of Jane* (1949) starring Christabel Leighton-Porter based on the long running *Daily Mirror* comic strip Jane about the girl who always seems to lose her clothes and ends up nude in some peril. *Kipling's Women* (1963) based on Rudyard Kipling's *The Ladies* and starring British pin-ups Margie Sutton and Lisa Gordon. Beautiful Gabrielle Drake, a major star in England on TV and stage made two exploitation films and one cult film. *Au Pair Girls* (1972) is by Val Guest no less. *Commuter Husbands* (1972) is by well known British exploitation director Derek Ford. *Connecting Rooms* (1969) which starred Bette Davis was never released because the star hated it. But after *Au Pair Girls* broke box office records it was rushed into release to capitalize on Gabrielle Drake's nude scenes in it. If anyone knows of a U.S. company that has tapes of these last two films I would like to know who. A major figure in British exploitation is Harrison Marks who has been called England's answer to Russ Meyer. These as well as a host of other British exploitation films deserve coverage.

Articles on the cycle of jungle girls films started

by the German *Liane* films starring Marion Michael in the 1950s and continued by Catherine Schell in the 1960s and Kitty Swan in the 1970s. But it is not just German films, jungle girls have been featured in American films, Maureen O'Sullivan as Jane in the Tarzan films particularly the nude scenes in *Tarzan And His Mate* as well as Sheena played by both Irish McCalla and Tanya Roberts. Italian films like *The Wild Girl*, *Mistress Of The Apes* and *King of Kong Island*. The Spanish film *Eve* and even a Hong Kong made film *Goliath* featuring a jungle girl with a giant ape guardian. Besides these there are many others like *Tanya's Island*, *Bowanga! Bowanga!*, *White Cannibal Queen*, *White Slave Of The Cannibal God*, *The Emerald Jungle*, *The Last Safari*, *Devil Monster*, *The Blonde Captive*, all featuring women who go native either by choice or at the insistence of the locals. Articles on these type films would be welcome.

I would also like to point out to your advertisers that many films of the '50s and early '60s like *High School Confidential* were shot in two versions, one without nudity for the U.S.A. and one for foreign release. They should release the uncensored versions on tape.

James Killian
Sumiton, AL

Dear Cult Movies,

Since high school I've enjoyed monster films and old silent movies. I especially like the Japanese monster films, so naturally I like your magazine with all the swell coverage. But why don't you come out monthly? I want more of my *Cult Movies!!!*

Stephen Robins,
New York NY

Dear Cult Movies,

Many thanks for the new issue — another "winna"! Lotsa Wood stuff this time around, but really enjoyed the other material too.

It was about time that somebody interviewed the mysterious Barry Mahon. His son is, or was, in film distribution for a while and he worked on selling the foreign rights to our film, *Terminal Force*.

Mahon's stories are rather fanciful sounding and I'm a little surprised at the low regard he has for some of his work. A friend of mine named Jeffrey C. Hogue bought a few of Mahon's childrens films and *Santa's Christmas Elf* was among them. I was surprised (read that "stunned") to discover it was an animated feature without any visible animation. As close as I can recall, it was just a series of still images being projected with sound over them. I can imagine the kids reactions upon seeing that! So much for pioneering the world of computer animation...

Pirate's World, which he spoke of, was a Pay-One-Price amusement park in Dania, Florida. I saw Grand Funk Railroad there with Bloodrock (they did D.O.A.) back in '72. It also housed the NWA Wrestling shows and was the base for a TV station (Channel 51 I think) where Horror Host M. T. Graves originated. It was quite a place.

Devil Rider, Brad Grinter's film, was, I believe, financed from tuitions Grinter would get from film-hungry students who participated in his Viking Cinema Workshop — a sort of pay-as-you-play film school. It was available on video as *The Master's Revenge* through Academy Entertainment and is not very good...

Really liked the article on Lugosi's stage work. There was an interesting Horror Show photo of him at work in that great book, *Ghostmasters*. Does anybody remember when Martin Landau did his hammy Vampire-Lugosi-imitation, cape and all, on *The Man From U.N.C.L.E.*? Got a photo of that????

All for now,
Fred Olen Ray,
Hollywood, CA

Dear Cult Movies,

I really enjoy each issue of your magazine. #11 was great! I was really pleased to see the tribute to Valda Hansen; as a fan of hers, it's nice to see that others were too.

Michael Thomas Reed,
Eugene, OR

Dear Cult Movies,

I am writing to you in hopeful pursuit of some information. I recently bought your issue #11, covering Ed Wood Jr. I have long been a fan of Wood's and have videos of all his 1950s output except *The Bride And The Beast*. In fact, I've been told by various sources that it simply was not available on videocassette. I need this film!

I find your magazine to be fascinating. Although I picked it up from the comic book shop because of the Ed Wood cover story, I feel I will be buying it regularly in the future.

David Burlington
Travelers Rest, SC

(See Admit One Video's ad in this issue for address and phone number.)

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JOSE MOJICA MARINS, the Brazilian Master of Horror, left quite an impression on his American audiences! Response to Coffin Joe has been overwhelming; he has proven beyond a doubt, to be one of the most popular cult filmmakers to come along in ages! His tales of violent psycho-sexual horror are played out so excessively and in such a weird atmosphere that anything else will seem tame in comparison!

AT MIDNIGHT I'LL TAKE YOUR SOUL

1963, black & white

The first appearance of Coffin Joe (Jose Mojica Marins.) The evil hero is a gravedigger who haunts a small town in search of the woman who will give him the perfect son to continue his legacy of horror. A classic of South American horror, this is a gruesome piece of art and a masterpiece of gore and blood. Makes *Night of the Living Dead* look like *Driving Miss Daisy*! A movie that hasn't lost its power after 30 years and a must-see for all of Mojica's fans!

THIS NIGHT I WILL POSSESS YOUR CORPSE

1968, black & white with color inserts

In this sequel to the classic *At Midnight I Will Take Your Soul*, Ze do Caixao (Coffin Joe) continues his relentless search for the perfect woman to bear his perfect child. This film has some of the most intense horror scenes of Mojica's career. See him crushing people's heads in his horror chamber, torturing innocent women with dozens of snakes and tarantulas, and finally meeting their incarnated spirits. Mostly in black & white, except for an outstanding color sequence where Coffin Joe is dragged to Hell and forced to watch all kinds of atrocities and nastiness!

STRANGE WORLD OF COFFIN JOE

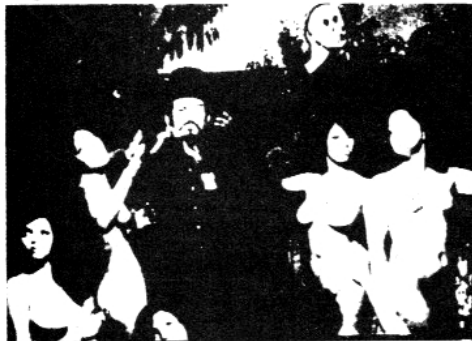
1968, black & white

Three episodes of blood, horror and despair! The first story shows a bizarre dollmaker whose creations look almost human. Almost? In the second story, Mojica shows us the pleasures and dangers of necrophilia. Then in the third episode - in order to prove his theory that love is dead - Coffin Joe appears disguised as a doctor. He captures and tortures a couple of non-believers in the most bizarre, cruel and nail-biting moments ever put on celluloid!

AWAKENINGS OF THE BEAST

1968, color

This movie is so grotesque - and so ahead of its time - that the Brazilian dictatorship banned it from video and theatres for 18 years! "The Beast" of the title is LSD. Mojica shows the suffering of a drug user who is tormented by visions of terror and pain. It's like *The Haunting* on acid! A psychedelic jigsaw of violence and incredible images!



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HALLUCINATIONS OF A DERANGED MIND

1970, black & white, color

Mojica puts together all the scenes that were censored by the military dictatorship in Brazil in one movie! *Hallucinations of a Deranged Mind* shows the curse of a young man haunted in his dreams by Coffin Joe. For the first time, Mojica's fans can see the banned scenes from over ten of his movies! It's a mix of color and black & white footage which proves the genius of this director and actor.

HELLISH FLESH

1970, color

George Medeiros (Mojica) is a scientist obsessed with his experiments to create an acid formula that can dissolve an entire human body. His scheming wife Rachel and her gigolo Oliver plan to get rid of George and spend all his money, using the acid formula for his demise. After George is hideously disfigured, he undergoes surgery (which is actual footage of an eye operation) and plots his revenge. See who gets the last laugh!

THE END OF MAN

1971, black & white

This is Mojica's "serious" movie. He plays Flins Hominis, a preacher with alleged supernatural powers. See Mojica waking up the dead, curing paraplegics and penetrating the psychedelic world of hippies! A very interesting study on the exploration of faith and mysticism.

THE BLOODY EXORCISM OF COFFIN JOE

1972, color

Mojica plays himself, the filmmaker and philosopher, who questions the possible existence of his own fictional creation - Coffin Joe! Sporting a bellbottom leisure suit, Mojica visits friends who are seemingly normal, until strange supernatural occurrences begin and members of the family become violently possessed by unseen forces. The creepy happenings lead to and culminate in a perverse, ritualistic ceremony featuring naked devil worshippers, torture, mutilation and cannibalism with none other than Coffin Joe presiding over the festivities!

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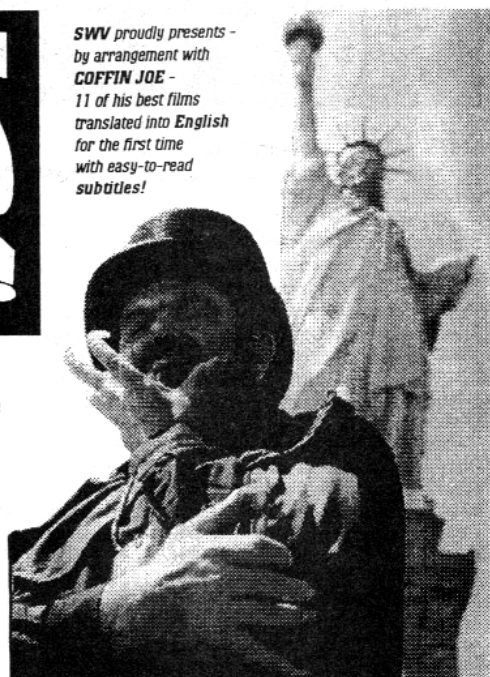
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THE STRANGE HOSTEL OF NAKED PLEASURES

1975, color

Produced by Mojica and directed by his disciple Marcelo Motta, this horror movie shows Mojica as the owner of a haunted hostel where the guests can make their most abnormal dreams come true! The many bizarre scenes invoke the same ambience as his earlier banned film *Awakenings of the Beast*. There's plenty of violence!

PERVERSION

1978, color

Mojica plays a millionaire with unusual sexual habits. In one of his most "inspired" moments, he bites off a girl's nipple only to show it as a trophy to his friends. The original title *Estupro* (Rape) had to be changed due to censorship. It's a real sick one!

COFFIN JOE'S VISIONS OF TERROR

1963-86, black & white, color, COMPILATION

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MOVIE & VIDEO REVIEWS

The Lost Continent

(1951, Lippert. With Cesar Romero, Chick Chandler, John Hoyt.)

For years after *The Lost World* (1925) made big noises at the silent screen box office, nearly every new "prehistoric" picture featured a facsimile of that film's plot. *King Kong* was the biggest and best (RKO bought the *Lost World* story rights as well as the film itself), followed by *Son Of Kong* and the lowly *Unknown Island*, which gamely pilfered from *Lost World* and *Kong*. Even dinosaur movies which didn't end up getting made, like the proposed RKO *Guangxi*, followed the basic outline.

Despite its derivative title, *Lost Continent* gave the first impression of featuring a new plot and a fresh approach. Its posters depict a soaring rocket and its opening scene (set at an Air Force tracking station) is almost noirish in tone: Tight, shadowy close-ups on the strained faces of scientists as news is received via radio that their atom-powered rocket has shot irretrievably off-course. But the man behind *Lost Continent*, executive producer Robert L. Lippert, was a follower, not a setter of trends, and after a bit more exposition, *Continent* is off on the same old, well-trodden wilderness trail.

The runaway rocket must not fall into the Wrong (i.e., Red) Hands, so the Air Force assigns Major Cesar Romero to scour the South Seas area where it presumably splashed down. Accompanied by co-pilot Chick Chandler, comic relief crew chief Sid Melton and rocket scientists John Hoyt, Hugh Beaumont and Whit Bissell, Romero searches the area in a bomber until, just over the crash area, the plane's electrical system fails. After a hard landing in the jungle of a nearby island, the men find a small native village and an island girl (Acquanetta) who tells them of a "firebird" ("island-ese" for atomic rocket) which frightened away her people and set down on a lofty plateau. As the search party scales the nearly-vertical mountain, Hoyt catches a glimpse of a dinosaur-sized lizard on an upper ledge, and poor, out-of-condition Bissell later falls to his death. Atop the mountain, the men find a lush jungle, uranium fields, the errant rocket and man-eating prehistoric monsters.

There are a lot of bad things that could be said about *Lost Continent*, including (just for starters) the unoriginal plot and the endless, boring scenes (nearly 20 minutes) of mountain-climbing. (As in Lippert's similar *The Jungle*, the hiking scenes are spiced with character conflict—John Hoyt is a Russian and therefore, says Romero, not to be trusted.) But between the cast, the comfy/familiar storyline and the monsters, the movie has enough pleasing nostalgic elements to keep most monster fans coming back for return visits. Bad marks are MOST regularly handed out to *Lost Continent* by stop motion buffs who take one look at the jerky, silent era-type animation and condemn the movie as a whole. But, regardless of the results, hats off to Lippert for going the extra mile and employing stop motion in an era of dino-movies tiresomely filled with *One Million B.C.* stock footage.

The cast fills the bill nicely except perhaps for Chick Chandler, so petulant that no feeling of camaraderie with Romero ever develops even though it's obvious that that was the intent. (A one-picture-a-year series starring Romero and Chandler as the pilot and co-pilot was briefly mulled by Lippert.) Despite the obvious soundstage "exteriors," the movie has a low-key, almost persuasive atmosphere, and gives an indication what the much-reviled Neufeld brothers could accomplish with a few extra dollars. (Sigmund Neufeld produced, Sam Newfield directed.) Paul Dunlap's music suits the mood, although the brief passages which later turned up in *I Was A Teenage Werewolf* are distracting. And the film's highlights (a brontosaurus chasing Beaumont up a tree, a ceratopsian goring Melton, etc.) are as much fun as ever.

Lippert producer Murray Lerner signed Romero

to a two-picture deal (the first of which was *Lost Continent*), then reportedly negotiated to have Veronica Lake, of all people, appear opposite Romero in the dinosaur pic. The film began shooting at Goldwyn Studio on April 16, 1951, at which point the filming of trick shots had been underway in secret for four months. (Lippert, famous for ripping off other people's movie ideas, obviously had no desire to be ripped off himself!) In Seattle, heralds printed locally from damaged ad mates appeared with the title *Lost Continent*, which probably didn't hurt the box office any. Typically, Lippert made sure that his picture was plugged like crazy; in just four weeks, the cast members and the technical crew (Romero, Beaumont, Chandler, Melton, Acquanetta, Dunlap, writer Richard Landau, director of photography Jack Greenhalgh and production designer F. Paul Sylos) made 39 radio and TV guest appearances. The campaign obviously paid off: By October, Romero, who owned a percentage of the picture, had received a first check for \$17,250. (At the time, Romero said he expected to eventually make \$75-80,000 off his percentage.) And who's to say that the box office success of this low-budgeter didn't perhaps partially inspire the Harryhausen-launching *Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, made by producers with similar backgrounds?

Sinister Cinema's transfer is sharp and clean; in fact, I noticed for the first time that in the famous shot where Whit Bissell falls off the mountain and vanishes into the cloud, John Hoyt (occupying about one-third of the frame) simultaneously vanishes too! True to the original theatrical release, the mountaintop scenes are tinted an eye-pleasing pale green. Small complaints are that the original 35mm print occasionally shows a bit of wear, and Melton's dying speech ("What a way to go, baby!"), approximately one minute, is missing—which was all right, because I'd had my fill of him by then anyway.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

The Defilers (1965)

One thing I like about low-budget exploitation movies is the unintentional mirror their stories generally hold up to the minds of the people who created them. Ed Wood's notoriously personal scenarios are among the most famous examples; and now I suspect that David Friedman, who wrote and produced *The Defilers* (direction and photography are credited to R. L. Frost), just might be at least as interesting.

Some movies are so psychologically perfect that one doubts their creators ever knew how deep they were going. *Godzilla's Revenge* is one. *Glen Or Glenda* another, and, in a different genre, *The Defilers* is another. It is unlike any movie I have seen other than *I Spit On Your Grave*. *The Defilers* at once is far less graphic and far more interesting, while covering much the same territory: what happens when a woman is kidnapped and abused by men. *Grave* writer-director Meir Zarchi is on the record as saying his movie (originally entitled *Day Of The Woman*) is a firm anti-rape statement. Given the similar ineptitude of his next movie *Don't Mess With My Sister*, I tend to believe him: he's a terrible communicator, but I think he does mean well. David Friedman on the other hand doesn't seem to have any such high-minded ambition, yet in *The Defilers* he has created a far more compelling tableau.

Simply put, it is about a pair of wealthy and disaffected young men in search of "kicks," whatever the cost to the women who cross their paths. Jim Marsh is an easy mark given to spouting the oddest attempts at pillow talk: "Are you a real blond?" he asks of his first onscreen conquest. "Maybe," she inventively responds, "I'm prematurely bald." "I've never known a bald girl before." She appraises him: "By the same token, you must be a boy." Admiringly he replies, "You are the foresighted kind." There are many more exchanges of this caliber, chief among them another

girl's assessment of Jim's pal Car. "What is he anyway," the girl fumes, "A peek freak? That buddy boy is something out of a horror flick." Jim bridles instantly: "What is this," he barks, "a one-woman panel discussion about Carl Walker Jr.? Why don't you get some slides to go along with your lecture."

This foreplay completed, they slide into lovemaking, while nearby Carl beds down with a girl whom he spansks (complete with close-ups of hand marks) and rapes (though eventually she seems to go along with it). Carl's philosophy is "There's only one thing in this whole crummy square-infested life that counts: KICKS!" In search of same, he enlists Jim's help in kidnapping the beautiful, virginal Mai Jansson, whom they hold prisoner in Carl's "love dungeon." Carl feeds her by appropriating leftovers from his maid (prompting his father to roar, "Who the hell do you know who needs my chicken legs?") In time the film's only emotional dynamic, existing between Carl and Jim, predictably though unexplainably explodes into violence.

This dynamic, and Friedman's conscious or (more likely) unconscious understanding of it, is what separates *The Defilers* from the herd. Most movies of this type are (often accidentally) revealing of how the filmmakers (usually men) see women (as ideals, or whores, or both). Friedman's story on the other hand centers on how the two men, Carl and Jim, relate through women, who, including Mai Jansson, are interchangeable and even irrelevant to the story except symbolically. (There is a third male character of import, Carl's father, who seems to be played by the same actor wearing glasses and a really fake-looking mustache.) They call each other "blood brother" and indeed their interplay has a distinctly fraternal dynamic (much like the later *I Spit On Your Grave*), with Carl as the taunting, withholding older brother (or perhaps father), and Jim as the younger brother, sometimes resentful but willing, even eager to go along. The nature of this bond could be clearer by the end, with Carl needing Jim about his "yellow streak showing," and Jim grouching "I'm tired of that damn line every time I don't follow the leader." Intentionally or now (surely not), Friedman has produced a remarkably observant allegory for the way some men use women as a way to get closer to each other—not in a homoerotic sense, but actually, paradoxically, in a homophobic sense. The characters do not read as gay, but to many if not most Western audiences, they probably would; while in fact, the script is a near-perfect distillation of the fraternal dynamic that springs up between some men who are not brothers, now lovers. There are very few stories in the body of film, and those I have seen (Bobby Roth's tiresome *Heartbreakers* is one) never seem to find a real ending. The gory and nihilistic finale of *The Defilers* doesn't either, but its details are as surprising as most everything else on view.

Other viewers will probably have different ideas about what's going on, while even the least demanding should be satisfied with the crazily campy dialogue, the abundance of topless actresses, and a heavy dash of sadomasochism (all that spanking.) One of the film's greatest pleasures is its seeming blindness to how different it really is. (Available from Something Weird Video)

Reviewed by Guy Tucker

The Ramrod (1968)

According to the box art, this is "the definitive film of the Great American Sexplosion." As such I feel shame that I never heard of it before. It is a reasonably curious and piquing saga of white-Indian relationships shot through a soft-core lens.

The lens is even out of focus in one of the several, mostly interracial love scenes directed by Van Guilder; but for the most part, this feature from writer-producer David Friedman is technically competent. The script is another matter. Riding off to see his girlfriend, cowpoke Rick leaves a subordinate "in charge of the harem" (a bunch of cows). "Don't disappoint a single one of em!" "I might surprise a few." (Did I mention these are cows?) Rick is off to see "If I can remember what I'm supposed to do with a real live

girl!"

He doesn't have any trouble remembering, but along the way he has stumbled upon a bunch of naked bathing Indian girls. One of them, Tawana, is about to undergo the ritual Dance of the Virgins. She spies Rick again when he visits her village, and, fascinated that he saw her naked, freely offers her "purity" to him later. This serves to exonerate him of charges of raping and murdering an Indian princess (the murderer is played by, I think, Manson family member Bobby Beausoleil!)

The Ramrod is crammed with images of sexual domination and humiliation, with women (two white, one Indian, who eventually goes lesbian) as its targets. As such it is fairly typical of erotica of its era, and however chaste the actual amount of flesh on view (at this time the pubic area was still taboo), the sheer dirtiness of much of the imagery delivers a larger kick than nearly anything produced today. Juvenile as is the actual effect, still palpable is the feeling that one is seeing things one isn't supposed to: the nonstop close-ups of naked breasts rubbing as Tawana knife-wrestles with Rick's white girlfriend Lucy ("Don't think you're going to turn my Rick into a squaw-man!" Lucy shrieks); or Tawana's saving Rick in the last reel by proving her lack of virginity, probed by another woman (her eventual lover) in a distant tepee.

I have seen three David Friedman movies, and when they slow down for scenes of dialogue, they are often memorably jarring. "It's not you and me that's confusing," Lucy says at one point, "it's ME and me." Rick blinks. "Now you're confusing ME," he understandably replies. A similar exchange occurs earlier among the rebellious, gang-raping Indian braves: "What better way to confuse us than with our own logic?" one snarls. Friedman in a nutshell!

Reviewed by Guy Tucker

The Awful Dr. Orlof (1962)

The very feature that catapulted Spanish director Jess Franco to international notoriety, and it's easy enough to understand why. The dubbing isn't bad and the sets and lighting come across as quality. Lead actor Howard Vernon, as Orlof, is reasonably magnetic (he reminds me of Jonathan Frid), and attention was paid to the export market (there are several shots of newspaper headlines and the like, written in English). As well, the main characters are well delineated (indeed, some, like the crusading chief detective, appear to be geared for further exploitation in a series). There are some remarkably sharp lines of dialogue, such as this bit with a drunk in a bar: "I drink to forget," he explains. Forget what? "People and things," he elaborates.

Such comic relief is rife in the film, so much so it becomes distracting. One odd-looking fellow strides into the station trying to give himself up for the murders Orlof's henchman commits; he is a striking ringer for the distorted police sketch printed in the newspaper. Franco pulls several similar gags, casting numerous actors in sizable parts who resemble each other; the images of twinning grow so thick (Orlof and his henchman; the inspector and his aide) that they begin to feel intentional, just unsubtle enough to have been part of the director's scheme (for Franco, while competent here, is hardly what you'd call artful).

By the end, it feels as if Franco's people have no true identities. The singer Wanda motivelessly masquerades as a hussy in a tavern, where she eventually falls victim to Orlof; when he seizes Wanda, it is to use her face to restore the face of his dead-to-the-world daughter, but the daughter (and another woman helper) have already been reduced to zombies by Orlof's work. It is as if Wanda, in search of a new face, must be sentenced to lose it. The treatment of her

character is narrowly the film's cruelest, and certainly the most nonsensical.

Yet ultimately Franco does not judge her too harshly, and the finale is bubbly enough to be considered very Hollywood. I wonder if in the many sequels to this strangely popular movie, the same characters or kinds of characters were used; by the end, the bizarre and heroic triptych of detective, damsel and drunk feels like a formula, of a kind perhaps typical of many more movies than this one. A beautiful print of *Awful Dr. Orlof* is now available from Something Weird Video.

Reviewed by Guy Tucker

High Yellow (1965)

A racial melodrama that is surprising and engrossing, given its source, dadaist film sculptor Larry Buchanan (*Creation Of The Humanoids*). Not only does Buchanan appear to have his heart wound up in the story, he manages to rally far more filmic expressiveness than his reputation suggests. From the first frames, with a middle-aged black chauffeur sizing up his young female passenger from afar, it is obvious that Buchanan is really trying.

The first shot is of a dark-skinned young woman who could easily be black or white; fearing to give offense, the chauffeur errs on the side of caution. The woman, Cynthia, framed against a billboard reading, in part, "WHITE," shakes her head: "You were right the first time." She is the temporary black maid he is to drive to the mansion of a family dysfunctional enough to be worthy of Faulkner, and indeed, the story's nominal Los Angeles setting is jarring considering the obvious Southernness of the house's architecture, and the baroque backwoods psychotics who inhabit it.

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Cynthia is quickly befriended by the restless daughter, who's her age and relentlessly curious; "What's it like to be colored?" is practically the first thing she says. But she's no bigot, as the matinee-idol photo of Sidney Poitier on her wall attests, and she soon introduces Cynthia to all her friends. Cynthia begins to dream of passing for white, and in time she has to stand in the place of her white friend, only to find that it's not quite what she had bargained for (in an absurdly artificial scene that pre-figures a surprisingly upbeat and, for the time, unlikely climax) though there really is no precedent for a movie quite like this; the half-white half-black character isn't the heroine of any Hollywood picture I can name.

An unexpectedly passionate and watchable antiracist statement from the much-reviled Larry Buchanan. It's not up to the level of Roger Corman's *Shame*, but it's an unusual spectacle nonetheless, from the least likely of directors.

Now available from Something Weird Video.

Reviewed by Guy Tucker.

Die, Monster, Die!

(1965, AIP. With Boris Karloff, Nick Adams, Suzan Farmer)

It was an awfully good idea for AIP, which had run Edgar Allan Poe into the ground by the mid-'60s, to attempt to move one to another horror author. It was an awfully good idea to choose H. P. Lovecraft as the replacement. But filling their "Lovecraft" movie with stock ingredients from the Poe pics was such a BAD idea, it more than negated the first two.

Blame is sometimes heaped on the movie's writer Jerry Sohl, but he stood up for himself in a recent *Serilog* interview with Edward Gross. Sohl's script, written "on spec" and based on Lovecraft's novella *The Colour Out Of Space*, was bought by AIP president James H. Nicholson, who "loved it the way it was," according to the SF novelist. "Then along came Daniel Haller, who was to direct. He had a million changes he wanted me to make, and I refused to make even the first one because they were, by my thinking, silly. Haller was no writer, no dramatist, but there he was trying to rewrite as well as direct." In the 78 minute feature, Nick Adams is an American scientist (!) who travels to rural Arkham, England (sic), to visit girlfriend Susan Witley (Suzan Farmer) and her parents. Cliche piles upon cliché as frightened locals refuse to direct Adams to the remote Witley estate, the heath manor house turns out to be a vast, foreboding stronghold of gloom, and a discordant musical chord accompanies the first shot of dour patriarch Nahum Witley (an over-the-hill, and THEN some, Boris Karloff). A sinister figure lurking in the heath, the reclusive mother (Freda Jackson) hidden in a curtained bed, the sudden death of a servant (Terence DeMarney) and Karloff's nocturnal comings and goings propel the plot in small spurts until the final-reel revelation that Karloff is experimenting with a highly radioactive meteorite whose mutative properties are at the root of the mystery. Karloff, transformed into a glowing, metallic-looking monster by the radiation, climactically becomes an even LESS convivial host, with Karloff murderously chasing Adams and Farmer throughout the house. (In an interview, Karloff said it was the first monster he'd played since *Son Of Frankenstein*, but the role is obviously played by a stand-in and is NOT Karloff. According to set visitor Mike Parry, writing in *Castle Of Frankenstein*, "an earlier design for a long-haired monster had been completely scrapped along with some early footage that featured shots of Karloff in this makeup.")

The wide-screen (1.85-1) Pathacolor chiller (shoot-titled: *House At The End Of The World*) was the second filmization of a Lovecraft story (AIP's *The Haunted Palace* preceded it), although viewers unfamiliar with H. P.'s works would find it indistinguishable from the average AIP Poe movie; the only "un-Poe-like" moment is a brief scene of Nick Adams and Suzan Farmer discovering oversized mutant organisms flourishing in Karloff's locked-up greenhouse. Otherwise the Richard Matheson-esque plot revolved around the trite four-cornered triangle of a gloomy house, a mysterious patriarch, a pretty girl and a

handsome male visitor; there's even a Suzan Farmer-conducted tour through a series of eerie-looking family portraits. By the time the film is wrapping up with a fiery finale (surprise!), we expect to see the stock footage of the burning chicken coop seen in *House Of Usher*, *Tales Of Terror*, ad infinitum. Dan Haller, directing his debut film in imitation-Corman fashion, telegraphs the sudden-scare scenes and fails to maintain the rolling pace required to help viewers through a film with such a heavy aura of *Deja Vu*. There were even hints of trouble during production; a script conference was called one morning when rehearsals were interrupted by the constant giggling of the crew, and even stage-screen actress Freda Jackson protested, "I can't speak these lines; they're unspeakable!"

Putting Vincent Price in the patriarch role would probably have made things unbearably redundant, but Karloff—who turned 77 just a few months before the movie began production at London's Shepperton Studio on February 22, 1965—is a bit too geriatric to generate the required menace. Harried and sad-looking, he plays his sinister role broadly, as was his latter-day wont. Suzan Farmer receives special "AND INTRODUCING" billing as the bouncing, busty young leading lady, her cheerful exuberance undaunted by residence in Karloff's dreary mansion of doom—as though Gidget had somehow wandered into the House of Usher. And Nick Adams reacts blandly to weird goings-on and piercing screams in the night, and only once explodes at the high-handed Karloff (Adams here falling back on his troubled-teen style of acting). In *Modern Monsters* (June, 1966) interviewee Adams asserted that it was "an honor for me to have my name on the same line with Karloff, whom I personally consider one of the greatest of our time. ...Karloff is as much a star now as he was forty years ago. In this business that's nothing short of great, believe me. ...Last week [*Die, Monster, Die!*] opened in Los Angeles. The same week four "epic" pictures opened. Million dollar deals, you know. Today's *Variety* lists what films did what at the box-office. Ours took in more money than any of the others." The movie's exteriors were shot outside Oakley Court, an English mansion located a stone's throw from Hammer's studio of horrors, Bray.

Reviewers tended to emphasize the routineness of the film and yet made (probably accurate) predictions of an adequate box office response. In England, where it was released as *Monster Of Terror*, it was unwisely paired with *The Haunted Palace*, which had a similar story; one was set in Arkham, England, the other in Arkham NEW England. Around 1970, AIP announced a Lovecraft film (to be scripted by Robert Thom) that would combine *The Colour Out Of Space* with *The Case Of Charles Dexter Ward*; they never got around to making it. A second version of *The Colour Out Of Space*, the R-rated 1987 movie *The Curse*, starred Wil Wheaton and Claude Akins.

The Haunted Palace has the rep of being the "Poe film" that should be credited to Lovecraft. *Die, Monster, Die!* is the "Lovecraft" that should be partly credited to Poe...or, to be more accurate, to Roger Corman and Richard Matheson, whose earlier Poe collaborations are so slavishly, pains-takingly duplicated here.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

Dr. Phibes Rises Again

(1972, AIP. With Vincent Price, Robert Quarry)

AIP being what it was, the \$1.5 million take of *The Abominable Dr. Phibes* paved the way for an immediate sequel, the unimaginatively titled *Dr. Phibes Rises Again*. The title wasn't the only thing trite about the Robert Fuest-directed follow-up, which furnished a fancy explanation for the three-years-later resuscitation of Phibes but none for the mysterious return of his female sidekick Vulnavia, killed by acid in the finale of the first go-around. Price, "the most deadly mastermind of all crime" (trailer narration), still diddles at his Wurlitzer organ and tiresomely pines for his "sweet-e-et Victor-r-ria" (his dead wife), and embarks for Egypt with his sunken, baggy eyes peeled for an underground river and the "elixir of life" with

which he hopes to restore her. Robert Quarry, an enigmatic antiquarian, accompanied by lady friend Fiona Lewis, is also on the trail of the fantastic elixir. In a plot development second-to-any in originality, Price uses elaborate and fiendish (and ridiculous, and impractical) instruments of murder to "knock off" members of the competing Quarry/Lewis expedition.

"The trouble with confessions of this order," reported *The New Statesman*, "is that one is in doubt whether to laugh or go 'Yeuch!' and ends by doing neither." Actually the latter reaction, rather than one of merriment, seems the only possible adult response to the ugly, hard-to-watch scenes of slow torture which Fuest fancifully forwards in the cause of "good fun." Even Peter Jeffrey and John Cater, reprising their roles as bumbling policemen, are deflated by this lesser material; there isn't a glimmer of wit to Jeffrey's new one-liners. ("He has nothing to say, sir," Jeffrey "quips" about a man reduced to a skeleton by sand-blasting.) This time around, the best performance is given by Quarry, whose driven antiquarian is a more intriguing character than the played-out, one-note Phibes; Quarry acts circles around Price. The change in locale (England-Egypt) was a good idea, taking some of the feeling of sameness away from this sequel, which was co-written by Fuest and Robert Brees. Fuest told an audience at The Festival of Fantastic Films in England that he thought *Rises Again* was superior to the original until it was re-cut by AIP. "The ten minutes that they took out would have made that story so much more believable [sic]. They took ten wonderful minutes out because they said it wasn't suitable for the Americans...two scenes with Beryl Reid, which were just a delight, and one with Terry-Thomas. They were so funny, and they filled in all the flesh around the story."

Shot at the EMI-MGM Elstree Studios and on location in a Spanish desert, *Rises Again* got the same sort of mixed reviews as its predecessor. Phibes ends the movie sailing on a gondola (with his wife's body) down the subterranean River of Eternal Life; when *Rises Again* didn't perform up to expectations at the box office, it turned out to be a river of no return. Despite much talk of a second sequel, Phibes was (thankfully) gone for good.

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

Invasion USA (Columbia 1952)

With Gerald Mohr, Peggie Castle. From Sinister Cinema

The same week (December 17, 1952) that this was reviewed by *The Motion Picture Exhibitor*, that same publication also reviewed *The Hoaxters*, an MGM documentary expose' on Communist dangers, narrated by Howard Keel, George Murphy, Walter Pidgeon, Robert Taylor, James Whitmore and other Metro luminaries. The *Exhibitor* declared *The Hoaxters* "a 'must' in every American Theatre and in every 'still free' country." *Invasion USA* they called "okeh," and they recommended to theater owners that, if the movie could be had cheaply enough, it might be "interesting" on the bottom half of a twin bill.

Invasion's rep hasn't improved in the years since—in fact, it's gone down—and many now point to it with derision as a laugh-a-minute depiction of '50s Cold War paranoia. ("Paranoia" is what "preparedness" is called after the danger has been successfully averted.) It's actually a novel period piece, despite (or, maybe, because of) the fact that it's wantonly melodramatic, cheaply made, and brims with newsreel and combat footage. The surfeit of stock footage helped earn the movie its bum rap, but it's all this stock that now helps MAKE *Invasion* what it is, a fascinating "time capsule" movie which depicts a Russian attack on the U.S. and its effect on the lives of a group of "average" people.

The film opens in Tom Kennedy's Manhattan bar where TV commentator Gerald Mohr is going around with pencil and pad like a newspaperman, asking patrons what they think of the idea of a "universal

draft." Arizona cattleman Eric Blythe, tractor manufacturer Robert Bice and blowhard Congressman Wade Crosby all attack the notion. Their attitude prompts customer Dan O'Herlihy to quietly spout off about the American habit of expecting the *next* guy to do all the heavy lifting. As O'Herlihy self-consciously sloshes his drink around in his snifter, news comes over the TV that hundreds of foreign planes have been spotted flying south over Alaska; the invaders drop A-bombs on U.S. military air fields in the Northwest. (The nationality of the invaders is never announced, but Russkie is what they unmistakably are; late in the movie, one of the enemy soldiers even tosses in a "Da!")

The President of the United States (seen from the side in a quarter-profile) makes a televised speech about America's second "day of infamy": ("We shall bomb their bases. And their army! Their factories. And their railroads!") The enemy continues their incursion, A-bombing shipyards and prompting bar patron Peggy Castle to ask, "Is it as bad as it sounds?" (I never said that the people who deride this movie were *entirely* wrong!) Bice and Blythe fly to San Francisco, which immediately sustains an air attack; Bice is shot and killed after his factory has been taken over by Russkies commanded by Bice's window-washer. Blythe takes a Yellow Cab from San Fran to his home near Boulder Dam, which is A-bombed as soon as he gets there; the cab can't outrace the flood waters. We learn that "the attacking forces are wearing American uniforms," but that line was slipped in just so that newsreel footage of U.S. troops could be used to depict the enemy invasion. England and France promise to get behind the U.S. (Oh no - not France!)

Castle gets a job in a blood bank while Mohr, our manly hero, is rejected by the Air Force, the Army and the Navy; his excuse to himself is that America must be out of guns. (Damn that Brady bill!) By this time, of course, the two are in love; "War or no war, people have to eat and drink - and make love!" Mohr de-

clares, locking lips with blonde beauty Castle. Enemy bombers atom-blast New York City, destroying Kennedy's bar; Kennedy is found crushed beneath the rubble, cocktail-shaker still in hand. Enemy parachute troops drop from the skies over Washington D.C. blustering fat-cat Crosby, wasting Congress's time with a filibuster, is among those killed. The enemy soldiers try to overrun Manhattan, whose citizens turn guerrilla fighters (we see none of this - unfortunately!). Mohr's fists are no match for a Russian rifle; rather than be raped by a fat-slob Russkie (Wyott Ordung), Castle takes a flying leap out of her apartment window.

The scene dissolves back to the bar where all the customers from the first scene are now reviving after having been mass-hypnotized by the mysterious O'Herlihy, who mesmerized them with his shiny snifter. (In other words, It Was Only A Dream.) All are chastened by their shared nightmare and race off to do their part in Keeping America Strong. Mohr and Castle, each of them assuming that the other is just like he/she was in O'Herlihy's dream-scenario, are in love.

Released in December 1952, *Invasion USA* was in the planning stage as far back as the summer of '51, when producers Albert Zugsmith and Robert Smith got the okay of the Department of Defense to portray an invasion of America. Harold Daniels was originally signed to direct, but Alfred E. Green was in the director's chair when production got underway; similarly, actor Michael O'Shea, caught in a scheduling conflict, was replaced by Gerald Mohr before shooting began. The indie feature went into production at the Motion Picture Center on April 7, 1952, and "wrapped" at the end of its eighth day, April 15. In September, Columbia signed to distribute it. *Invasion's* cost, according to Zugsmith, was \$127,000, which sounds way too high considering how cheap it looks, the fact that it was done in eight days, and probably runs (without the stock footage) under an hour.

Invasion USA is a wonderfully evocative vehicle in which to revisit that era of very serious international tension. As tawdry and manipulative as it seems *now* (and maybe *then*, too), some of it must have been harrowing stuff during the Red Scare; the shadows of enemy bombers on Boulder Dam, and parachute troops descending over the White House, are sobering images even in this Z-movie context. The extensive stock footage is generally *part* of the plot rather than an interruption, and by their *nature* (actual scenes of ferocious combat), these scenes are compelling. (It's not until near the end, when Albert Glasser starts musically underscoring the stock footage with snatches of *His Truth Goes Marching On*, that it becomes tiresome.) Even Jack Rabin's so-so special effects add to the fascination, or *charm* if you will, of this marvelous museum piece. And if *Invasion USA* is so bad, why is it still remembered and written about today while a movie like *Men Must Fight* (1933), a glossy sci-fi Metro film with Diana Wynyard, Lewis Stone, May Robson and Robert Young, which *also* depicts the invasion of America and the bombing of New York, is forgotten? (Now *there's* an unbeatable double-bill!)

Columnist Hedda Hopper promised on *Invasion's* posters, "It will scare the pants off you" (Hopper acted in *Men Must Fight*), and respected drama critic Edwin Schallert said nice things about the picture in *The Los Angeles Times*, maybe partly because his kid (William) was in it. So were Edward G. Robinson, Jr., John Crawford, Phyllis Coates and Noel Neill (both Lois Lanes). Even with its many flaws, *Invasion USA* is still an intriguing movie-watching experience provided that you've got an interest in modern history (B-movie style, that is) or a love-of-country (verging on jingoism). Me, I've got *both*!

Also included are trailers for *Phantom From Space*, *The Amazing Transparent Man* and *Black Sabbath*, starring "the personable Mark Damon."

Reviewed by Tom Weaver

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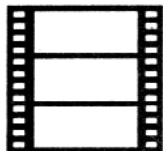
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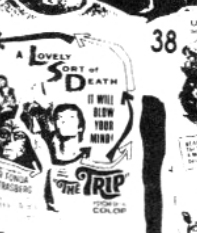
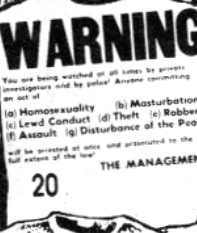
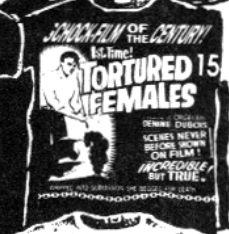
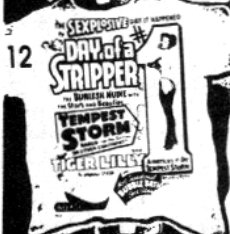
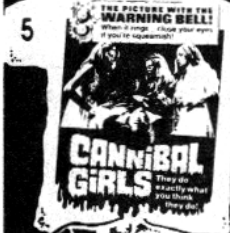
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Scream Of The Butterfly

(1965, Essence Productions. Starring Nelida Lobato, Nic Navarro, Richard Beebe, Leona Cage. Dir Eber Lobaty. Music by John Neel. Photographed by Ray Dennis Steckler)

John Densmore acknowledged that he and Jim Morrison saw this title on an adult theatre marquee while The Doors were on tour, and Morrison appropriated it for a Doors tune. *Scream Of The Butterfly* is a rambling story of a love triangle, treachery, lust, and murder. Told in awkward flashback style there's a nice seedy assortment; alcoholism, a cheating wife, shameful bisexuality, shady politics and a sick, shocking, sleazy surprise ending. You'll feel as though you've been talked to death by the over-scripted narrative descriptions, but it pays off in some decent breast shots and sultry love scenes on the beach. The repeated footage of Nelida Lobato's playful bubblebath is worth seeing a second time. A flawless B&W print, and a world video premiere on Johnny Legend's Untamed Video series, available from Something Weird Video.

Reviewed by Daniel VonVirtro

The Brainiac

(1963, Mexico)

"1661" appears on the screen and we're in a tribunal chamber of the "Grand Inquisitors. "Suddenly one of the hooded figures starts to speak: "We, the Grand Inquisitors, protector of the faith against heretic sins of apostasy in the city of Mexico and all the states and dominions in the province of New Spain and its viceregal governing body through royal audiences in all the cities and states do proclaim...." whew! From this unwieldy opening you know that this is not going to be your typical bad movie experience. Far from being your standard south-of-the-border celluloid junk, *The Brainiac* is something special when it comes to bad cinema. The story is straightforward enough: Baron Vitalius, a "sorcerer and heretic" is burned at the stake by the Inquisition. As he's engulfed in superimposed flames he looks up and sees an unconvincing painting of a comet moving across the heavens and utters this curse to his executioners: "I shall return to your world in 300 years when that (comet) completes its cycle and is once again in these latitudes. When that happens I will take my revenge upon you. I will kill each and every one of your descendants and I shall expunge your foul lineage from this earth..." And he means it. Suddenly it's 1961 and the comet is spotted. Cut to soundstage landscape and a paper-mache rock drops down (exactly like a '10 Ton Weight' from a "Monty Python" skit) and dissolves, revealing *The Brainiac*. With an oversized puffy paper-mache head which inflates and deflates for horrific emphasis, a long pointed nose, an even longer 12 inch forked tongue, and lobster pincers for hands, this is one of the most ludicrously fun monsters ever to suck brains. And that's just what he does with that protruding tongue of his, sucking his victims' grey matter out through their necks. Moreover, he can change into human guise to hypnotize and lure his victims into tongue range. Intelligent *Brainiac* that he is, he also keeps a bowlful of brains in his locked cabinet which he can daintily spoon out whenever in the mood for an in-between meal snack. The unintentional hilarity is increased by the cast's deadly seriousness, especially Abel Salazar (who also produces) as the brain-sucking Baron. If this boffo plot doesn't grab you, how about an endless assortment of painted paper backdrops. There are absolutely NO outdoor shots; it is completely studio-bound. Location shooting is taken care of by having the cast stand in front of various blown-up photographic backdrops of observatory, bridge, night sky, cityscape, etc. (even Roger Corman, on his 2-day wonder, *The Little Shop Of Horrors*, went outside to shoot once in a while). There's great bad dialogue ("I wish they'd find some way to control the subject of Man's studies. A maniac with a lot of knowledge is a threat"), laughable effects, name problems (Alternately calling him Baron Vitalius and Count Vitalius), and a pair of inspectors who inexplicably show up

with flame throwers to wrap it all up. There are also too many boring lectures and banal conversations, which slow things down. And missing is the great thirties horror atmosphere (mist enshrouded graveyards, dripping dank crypts) usually found in the Mexican horror productions of this time. But when the title terror shows up it's no-holds-barred guffaws for bad cinema lovers, sort of a "Plan 9 From South Of The Border." In the right frame of mind, even those not enamored of "golden turkeys" can enjoy this one-of-a-kind cheapie.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

Deranged

"This is a true story, these events really happened...." These rather bold statements are what opens this little-seen low-budget 1974 shocker based on the hideous crimes of Ed Gein, the notorious graverobber/murderer known as the "Wisconsin Ghoul." Though not entirely accurate, the film manages to capture the bizarre perversity of this real-life horror story. The film has a bleak and despairing feel to it, providing a fitting background to the nightmarish situations. Roberts Blossom is frighteningly believable as the sexually repressed momma's-boy driven by loneliness and madness to unearth his mother's corpse and then provide "companions" for her. Yet even as he inspires fear and revulsion, Blossom also inspires pity. The straightforward, almost documentary style is countered at times with nightmarish slow-motion photography making those moments almost painfully terrifying. A climactic chase through the snow covered woods even equals *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* in its raw energy. (*The Texas Chainsaw* also took its inspiration from the Ed Gein case.) Unfortunately, *Deranged* doesn't maintain the pace, and the film is seriously marred by an on-screen narrator who intrudes in front of the camera to inform us of the character's actions and feelings. This not only breaks the flow and the well-built up mood of perversity and decay, but often comes off as sanctimonious as well. Apart from these annoying intrusions, *Deranged* is a genuinely frightening and disturbing film which relies more on content than gore - of which there is refreshingly very little.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

The Eye Creatures

Larry Buchanan, that grade-Z filmmaker from Texas, strikes again with this uncredited remake of the 1957 AIP winner, *Invasion Of The Saucer Men*. AIP hired Buchanan to make several features for them which they could sell directly to television, and gave him free reign to plagiarize their past properties (*In The Year 2889* and *Zontar, The Thing From Venus* are two other examples). Despite the fact that entire scenes are copied word for word from *Invasion*, this version possesses none of the charm, humor, or fun of the original. Instead we get a 30 year old John Ashley playing a teenager, a supporting cast of non-actors, static (non)direction, day-for-night photography that keeps changing (black night sky alternating with shots of blue noonday sky in the same scene), and worst of all, ridiculous, pitiful, ineffectual monsters. The original Saucer Men, with their huge bulbous heads, bug-eyes, and leathery, veined skin are an icon of '50s monster movies. Here we get something that looks like the Michelin Tire Man on acid. These slow moving, silly looking aliens lumber about doing a bad Frankenstein's Monster imitation. The scene in which they weakly try to get into a car with a crowbar is simply pitiful. And pitiful is the operative word for this entire tired mess. Just watch *Invasion Of The Saucer Men* again instead.

Reviewed by Bryan Senn

Hercules And The Princess Of Troy

1965 Starring Gordon Scott as Hercules. Also starring Paul Stevens, Mart Hulswit, Diana Hyland, Gordon Mitchell, Roger Browne, Steve Garrett, Mario

Novelli. Narrated by Everett Sloan. Directed by Albert Band. Alternate title: *Hercules And The Sea Monster*

In this one Hercules and his men help save the people of Troy from a terrible sea monster, and save a young Princess who is being kept from the throne.

One of the shortest but most action packed of all Hercules adventures, but can't really be called a "movie." This, one of the last productions in the genre, is an unsold pilot for a Hercules television series bankrolled by none other than Joseph E. Levine, originator of the Steve Reeves films and Hercules series. As with most pilots for a TV series, they put everything they had into this. Whether the series would have relied on how much it cost to make them, and how quickly. The sets have been seen in one Hercules film after another. While it was common for the films to reuse a set or location, doing it in a weekly series would have been quite noticeable. It's a little short, just over 45 minutes, but it's got a great monster, a good hero, no bad dubbing, everyone uses their own voices, and some interesting guest stars to look for.

Gordon Scott gives a good performance for what is considered his last portrayal of the character, if not his last role in the genre. As opposed to his last few "Gladiator" films, he's shirtless for most of this film. This wasn't the best way to go, considering Scott was more bulk than style when it came to his build, but it was in character. They've darkened his hair and styled it so his resemblance to Reeves in his early years is very close. His acting is more natural than earlier in the series. The action scenes are well fought, but the battle with the monster is too typical for these films. While it's a great monster, Scott doesn't as much fight it as makes sure he's in reach of it to fight it off. It's a great scene when the creature lifts Scott off the ground, but he had to all but jump into its claws for it to happen.

Roger Browne of *Venus Meets The Son Of Hercules* makes an appearance as Ortag, the monster-turned soldier. He doesn't have much to do. Gordon Mitchell has a nice cameo as the Pirate Captain at the start of the film. It's the only time he and Scott worked together in the genre, so it was a nice pairing of the two. Diana Hyland would go on to attract some attention in the '70s. Within a matter of months she would begin starring as the mother on *Eight is Enough*, start dating John Travolta, discover she had cancer and die almost immediately. Her martyrdom was assured by *People* magazine and game show celebrities.

Carlo Rambaldi is said to have made the monster for the film. While his name isn't on the credits, he was mentioned as the creator of the creature long before his work on E. T., DeLaurentis' *King Kong*, and other films brought his name to the fore front of special effects. It's one of the best B movie monsters from the '60s. Scenes of Gordon Scott fighting it have been used in numerous films and television shows.

Reviewed by Stephen Flaccasser

Goliath And The Dragon

(1960) Starring Mark Forest as Goliath, with Broderick Crawford, Eleanor Ruffo, Gaby Andre, Philippe Hersent. Directed by Vittorio Cottafavi.

Goliath takes on everything from a dragon to his own brother to protect his kingdom and family.

This has just about everything you'd want out of a Hercules movie. It starts out great with one monster after another, along with Forest being able to show his stuff with great effect. If it just hadn't taken itself so seriously in certain scenes, mainly the ones with Broderick Crawford, then this movie would have been perfect. This film doesn't have the usual love triangle going on; it's more like a love hexagon with an option to expand. With the exception of Goliath's love for his wife, everyone else wants to marry someone who doesn't want to marry them, so on and so on... get a score card to keep track. When this starts to take over the movie, just hold on - another crazy monster is just around the corner! If you make it to the end you're rewarded with a great stop motion dragon.

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or the blood of your
armies shall cover
the earth"

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dragon in the seven
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elephants!

DARE the black pit
of terror!

DEFY the wind voice!



GOLIATH AND THE DRAGON

MARK FOREST • BRODERICK CRAWFORD • ELEONORA RUFFO AND A CAST OF THOUSANDS • AN AMERICAN INTERNATIONAL PICTURE

Major goofy looking monsters, top class beefcake and a famous Hollywood actor slumming it for the money. If you're honest enough to admit what you really like about these movies, this is the one.

Mark Forest, who was born in Brooklyn with the name Lou Degni, has his first screen role with this film and he doesn't waste a frame of screen time. From the very first scene to the last he looks great. His back and shoulders are so wide and massive that it looks as if his waist would be too small to support it. Forest starts the film by climbing down a cavern wall with no apparent support. If he had been aided by a safety rope, it would be noticeable since he's wearing practically no clothes. The rock face appears to be real and not a set. Since Forest is so massive, it's easy to see that it's him doing it and not a stunt double. Near the end when he's running out of the caverns as the ceiling collapses, check out his facial expression. He knows that the set is coming down right behind him and he's getting out of there fast! The parts where he's supposed to act with others is handled well but he's very stiff when he's not in action. Many of his natural stances come off as toned down versions of body-building poses. This is also one of the only films where he's given a beard. It makes his face look too small and isn't very full. It's easy to see why he rarely had one. The mini-toga he's given to wear is a little loose on the bottom, giving more of an impression of a pleated mini skirt.

While Broderick Crawford is in the film, his voice isn't. It's clear that his scenes as Eurystheus were filmed as closely together and as quickly as possible. They had to get him in the can and out before he cost the production any more money. He has a bad makeup scar that runs down his face but considering everything else that's thrown into this film, it would be strange if he didn't have it. The women are unfortunately portrayed as schemers or devoted cattle. While they are attractive, their only reason for being in the

(continued)

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film is to have someone to threaten and put in danger. The actor playing Goliath's brother looks so much like Sal Mineo it couldn't have been a coincidence.

The monsters are classic fun/bad. The fire-breathing dog just sits there and makes Goliath come over so it doesn't have to move. The bat creature spins out of control the second Goliath nits it - very "Sid and Marty Kroff" in quality. Polymorphus the centaur satyr is great. He even takes a few steps with his horse half. The bear costume is so bad that it's hard to believe they even considered using it. The dragon makes a cameo appearance in the first few minutes, but it's worth the wait till the end for it. Using both stop motion and a "life" size head to bring it to the screen, it's the icing on the cake. While none of these monsters are the least bit convincing, you know you'd have less fun if they were. All in all a top film in the series.

Reviewed by Stephen Flaccasser

Fire Monsters Against The Son Of Hercules

(1962) Starring Reg Lewis as Maxus, with Margaret Lee, Luciano Marin, Andrea Aureli, Birgit Bergen. Directed by Guido Malatesto.

Maxus fights hostile tribes and prehistoric monsters so the Valley of the Sun Tribe can live in peace.

While none of the monsters have anything to do with "Fire," they are some of the best of the worst you'll ever find. Only in a film like this can such low quality monsters be a positive factor in recommending a movie. The fact that they used just one of these monsters is surprising, but to use so many showed either a total ignorance of how bad they look or a total genius for including such hokey fun. Reg Lewis isn't shown off to the best effect. They rarely highlight his body and the action scenes are few and far between. So, the film can't be rated that highly for beefcake content. The plot isn't that great, the acting is typical for these films and the sets wobble a couple of times when people bump into them. So the film shows its budget limits far too often. The dubbing is as bad as it gets for these films. When Reg Lewis is talking to Idar at the beginning of the film, his lips move normally, but his voice thunders out of him like he's screaming. So hang in there mainly for the monsters.

Reg Lewis's performance is hampered by the rushed filming of this early entry into the movies that tried to quickly cash in on the genre. His build is stocky but not defined, his back being the better feature. He fights the monsters as well as anyone could, considering the lack of movement they had. Lewis at least tried to give the impression that he's having to put up a fight. They've dyed his hair a yellow blonde that shows patches of the natural brown underneath, or in some location shots, the blonde disappears all together. Most of the film he's walking around with Moa and looking off into the distance. They don't go into much detail about his character's origins. Since the story apparently takes place around the time of the ice age, it predates the classic Hercules time frame. At the end of the film, when Idar says good bye, it sounds as if he's calling the character Machiste, but even good copies of these films have such muffled sound it's hard to be specific. Given the alternate title for this film does feature Machiste in it, this might have been a hold over from another dubbing attempt at the film. So far, this is the only movie we've been able to find starring Lewis that fits the genre. He would continue in films, such as *Don't Make Waves*, and have bit parts on television.

Reviewed by Stephen Flaccasser

Children Of The Full Moon

(1984) Starring Christopher Cazenove, Celia Gregory, Diana Dors. Directed by Tom Clegg.

This little ditty is a leftover from Hammer's failed attempt at a TV anthology series. While something seems to have been lost in the translation to the small screen, a certain amount of the Hammer flavor has been preserved.

Tom (Cazenove) and Sarah (Gregory), a young British couple, are on holiday when their car breaks down in a remote part of the English countryside. The pair have to stay the night at the home of Mrs. Ardoy (Dors) and her creepy kids who look like part of a casting call for *Village Of The Damned*.

Despite Mrs. Ardoy's hospitality, though, things don't seem quite right. When Tom makes his way back to the car for their luggage, he is chased by some kind of creature that sounds suspiciously like a werewolf. When the couple retires for the evening, Mrs. Ardoy asks them not to leave their room during the night, and Sarah sees a wolf-like face at the window.

Tom's curiosity gets the better of him, and he climbs out the second story window. Just as he makes it to the ground, something breaks into the bedroom and attacks Sarah. While trying to scale the wall again, he falls and knocks himself unconscious.

Tom revives in the hospital and is told that he was knocked out when his car struck a tree. The entire incident with Mrs. Ardoy and her clan was just a dream. Sarah was uninjured, but she begins behaving strangely. She becomes somewhat aloof, and develops a taste for raw meat.

Shortly after the accident, Sarah learns she is pregnant. The gestation period proceeds at an oddly accelerated pace. Before coming to term, Sarah sneaks off to Mrs. Ardoy's house, which is indeed real. Tom follows and, while searching for the house, meets the true father of Sarah's child, as well as that of the other children in Mrs. Ardoy's care. He's a big hairy fellow with claws, sharp teeth, and a fascination with the full moon.

The gore level is kept to a minimum, but the sets and atmosphere provide a distinct feeling of dread. All in all, *Children Of The Full Moon* is a decent little horror story, but a werewolf movie that only shows a glimpse of the monster is bound to leave the viewer feeling a little gyped.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

The Demons

(1972) Starring Anne Libert, Doris Thomas, Britt Nichols, Howard Vernon, Alberto Dalbes, Karin Field, John Foster. Directed by Clifford Brown (Jess Franco).

The credits claim that *The Demons* was directed by "Clifford Brown" and based on a book by "David Kuhne," but don't you believe it. Both are pseudonyms for the prolific and perverse Jess Franco.

It is the time of the Spanish Inquisition, and an old woman is being executed for witchcraft. As the flames sear her flesh she curses Lady DeWinter, Lord Renfield, and Lord Jefferies for condemning her, and she swears that her daughters will carry out her vengeance.

Concerned that there may be something to this threat, Lady DeWinter and Lord Renfield track the witch's daughters to the Nunnery of Blackmoor. One of the sisters, Kathleen is taken away and tortured in the belief that she is a witch.

Meanwhile Margaret, the other sister, prays to the Virgin Mary for guidance. Instead, her dead mother appears to her and informs her that their family does indeed serve the forces of darkness. Satan appears and rapes Margaret, fully bringing her over to his side. Margaret then sets out to free her sister and have her vengeance on those who sentenced her mother to death.

Audiences in 1973 were shocked by the blasphemous images in *The Exorcist*, but *The Demons*, which was released in Europe a year earlier, makes the scene of Linda Blair masturbating with the crucifix seem tame by comparison. Nuns masturbating and having lesbian sex with one another, as well as the scene in which Sister Margaret is raped by Satan, a rosary dangling in her pubic hair the whole time, would probably have outraged many. Perhaps this was why *The Demons* was never released theatrically in the states.

Although the movie seems to ramble aimlessly at times, *The Demons* is surprisingly well paced for a Franco film, and it has strong thematic undertones. "The righteous are often wicked," says Satan to Sister Margaret, concerning the evil deeds performed by

Lady DeWinter and her associates in the name of God. Franco seems to be saying that, despite labels of good and evil, people are essentially worthless. By the end of the film none of the characters obtain salvation in any sense of the word. The sense of order that Christian beliefs assign to the universe is shattered.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

Horror Of Frankenstein

(1970) Starring Ralph Bates, Kate O'Mara, Veronica Carlson, Dennis Price and Dave Prowse. Produced and directed by Jimmy Sangster, screenplay by Jeremy Burnham and Jimmy Sangster. Available from Republic Pictures Home Video.

Probably the most curious entry in the Hammer Frankenstein series, *Horror Of Frankenstein* tries to be both a straight terror film as well as a spoof of the Gothic horror genre. Sangster makes it clear right from the start that this film is not to be taken too seriously. Even as the opening credits flash on the screen, we see young Victor Frankenstein drawing cut lines on a picture of a naked woman, as if she were a side of beef.

Ralph Bates (*Dr. Jekyll And Sister Hyde*, *Lust For A Vampire*) plays the good Doctor this time out. While his interpretation of the character is obviously inspired to some degree by Peter Cushing's delightfully Machiavellian Dr. Frankenstein, Bates' character often seems more concerned with getting some tail than creating life. Sexuality had become part of the Hammer formula by this point in the series, and while there is no actual nudity, the innuendo is sometimes so thick you can cut it with a scalpel.

As the film opens, Victor Frankenstein is a snotty young student who knows far more than his teachers and isn't afraid to admit it. Meanwhile, back at home, Victor's father the Baron refuses to let Victor go away to University in Vienna. The younger Frankenstein decides to do his old man in, thus acquiring his father's title and money.

But even with all that going for him, Victor can't seem to keep his libido in check. Just before the summer holiday Victor learns that he has gotten the Dean's daughter in a family way. Remaining true to character, he bolts, heading home to continue his experiments at the family castle, his friend Wilhelm in tow. Before leaving, though, Victor shows Wilhelm his latest success: a severed arm that comes to life when charged with electricity.

Victor and Wilhelm soon move from working with parts to reanimating a dead turtle. From there, of course, the next logical step is to rob a few graves, stitch together an artificial man and give it life. Wilhelm goes along for awhile, but when he feels things are getting out of hand he threatens to expose Victor. You don't really want to cross Victor Frankenstein, though, and Wilhelm is shortly on the receiving end of some serious voltage.

Soon the monster is up and around, wrecking across the countryside and doing away with anyone who gets in Victor's way. The creature (played by pre-Darth Vader Dave Prowse) is fairly unremarkable. The box shaped head and bolts give him more than a passing resemblance to Universal's trademarked Frankenstein monster. Sure, he's big and threatening, but with his non-existent facial expressions and lack of speech, Prowse's creature has no personality whatsoever.

All of this leads up to one of the most disappointing endings I've ever seen. The monster is done in by sheer chance, leaving Victor with an "Oh well, guess I'll just start again" look on his face. No big finale, the story just stops, and save for the destruction of the monster, little is resolved. The viewer is left to wonder, what was the point of the previous ninety-one minutes?

Hammer completists will want to see this one. For more casual fans it might be worth a peek, but only as a rental. *Horror Of Frankenstein* does have its moments, but it doesn't hold a candle to any of the Cushing Frankensteins.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

Zombie 2

(1980) Starring Tisa Farrow, Ian McCulloch, Richard Johnson, Al Cliver, Aurette Gay, Stefania D'Amario, Olga Karlatos. Directed by Lucio Fulci. From T-Z Video.

As part of the video industry's ongoing mission to confuse the living hell out of the public, T-Z Video has released *Zombie 2*. This is, of course, the same movie that has been available on tape as just plain *Zombie* for a decade now. *Zombie* was released in its native Italy under the title *Zombie 2* in hopes of fooling the public into thinking it was a sequel to George Romero's *Dawn Of The Dead*, which was released in Italy under the title (you guessed it) *Zombie*.

Baffled yet? Don't worry, we all are.

As the film opens a seemingly unmanned sailing vessel drifts into New York harbor. Much to the chagrin of the coast guard officers who board the boat, a walking dead man with a hankering for human flesh is hiding below decks. One of the officers has his throat bitten out before the zombie is knocked overboard.

Newspaper reporter Peter West (McCulloch of *Dr. Butcher M. D.*, and the TV series *Survivors*) is sent to investigate. He hooks up with Anne Bowles (Tisa Farrow, sister of Mia), whose father is the owner of the boat. The last Anne has heard from dear old dad was that he was on the island of Matouille.

Despite the usual warnings from the natives that the island is cursed, the pair hire a boat from Brian Hall (Cliver) and Susan Barrett (Gay). En route to Matouille, Susan does some gratuitously topless scuba diving and finds herself caught between a hungry shark and a submersible, flesh-eating ghoul. The two carnivores end up duking it out, taking healthy bites out of one another. The boat is damaged during the conflict, and our heroes just barely make it to their destination before finding themselves shipwrecked.

Upon reaching the island, West and company are greeted by Dr. Menard (Johnson, also of *The Haunting*

and *Beyond The Door*). We learn from the good doctor that there is some kind of contagion loose on the island that is causing the dead to rise. Menard doesn't believe in voodoo, but the reanimation of the dead defies the laws of science, leaving him baffled.

The dead soon outnumber the living, and the climactic stand-off takes place with the characters barricading themselves in the island hospital. Bullets and Molotov cocktails fly like...well, like they do in zombie movies.

Someone should explain the pan and scan process to the folks at T-Z Video. Quite often it looks like the video transfer was taken directly from the center of the screen without following the action to the left or the right. There are even scenes where characters talk to each other while both are offscreen, leaving the viewer to watch the dead space between them.

Fulci's *Zombie* was the first of a wave of Italian walking dead flicks. Unlike the Romero film that inspired it, though, *Zombie* has not withstood the test of time. While *Dawn Of The Dead* has some truly nasty gore effects, many of which are still effective today, the film is also backed by good acting, an interesting script, and taut pacing.

Zombie, on the other hand, has acting that ranges from fair to downright awful (admittedly some of this can be traced to the dubbed voices), a story with plot holes big enough to drive a fleet of coroner's van through (why ARE the dead coming back to life, how can 400 year old conquistadors still have so much meat on their bones, and why does every zombie movie feature a character stupid enough to let a reanimated loved one get close enough to take a hunk out of him?), and pacing almost as slow as the zombies themselves.

The biggest thing *Zombie* ever had going for it were the over the top gore effects, and they've long since been surpassed in films like *Evil Dead I and II*, *Dead Alive*, and *Re-Animator*. Granted *Zombie* has buckets of gore and an eye gouging scene that will put you off

your food for a bit, but the often sub-standard zombie makeup (paper-mache heads with worms stuffed into the eye sockets) ruins the overall believability.

Despite all this, *Zombie*, or *Zombie 2*, or whatever the heck you want to call it, is still fun in a mindless sort of way. Being the first of the Romero-inspired Italian zombie flicks gives the movie a certain distinction in horror history. Check it out for its value as a curio.

Reviewed by Matthew Bradshaw

Goliath And The Vampires

(1964) Starring Gordon Scott, Gianne Maria Canale, Jacques Sernas, Leonora Ruffo, Annabell Inconterera. Directed by Gialomo Gentilomo. Alternate title: *The Vampires*.

Goliath fights against a mysterious monster who runs a country and turns its people into a zombie army.

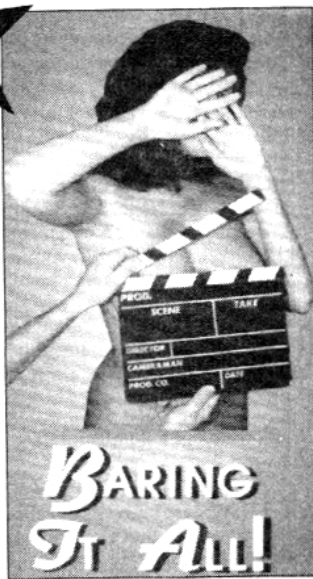
There are high points of strangeness in this film that, if kept a little more consistent, would have elevated it as a top entry in the series. There are fun things, almost for kids, from the start. Goliath fights briefly with a sea monster. Astra is almost fed to large insects which snap at her as she's lowered into a pit. Goliath punches a man and instead of just falling back, the guy shoots up to the second floor. There are Blue Men, Zombie slaves, and lots of escapist fun. Mixed in at the same time are scenes of blood and guts to counter these happenings. In Goliath's village there are people getting arrows in the eyes and burned alive while hanging upside down. When Goliath first arrives in the city, a man is whipped while climbing a pole till he falls on spikes. Worst of all they kill off the kid companion of the hero. It seems like they tried to make this movie one that parents could leave their kids at, but threw some more violent stuff in for the evening crowds. Since it was produced by Dino

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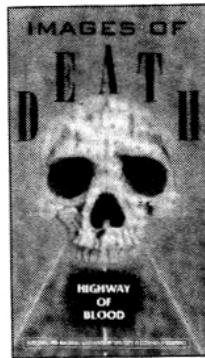
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ED WOOD

Screenwriters first came up with idea for the film as students at USC more than a decade ago.

Interview by Alexander McGregor

Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski's first screenplay was *Problem Child* which they wrote in their last year of college. Its success naturally spawned a sequel which might have made its money back and some more, but led the two partners to being pigeonholed in the "kiddie ghetto" with lots of offers to write "stupid comedies or kids films." And then, sooner than later, even those offers dried up. That's when they sat down to write a 10-page treatment on one of their long time obsessions, Ed Wood. Initially it was slated to be a low-budget film to be directed by their film school buddy Michael Lehmann who, like Scott and Larry, was also recovering from the burn-out of Hollywood studio excesses, having just come off directing *Hudson Hawk*. When Lehmann approached Denise di Novi and Tim Burton looking for a producer, Burton was so taken with the treatment that he decided that he wanted to direct it himself. Six weeks later Scott and Larry delivered the script and Burton moved into production without changing a scene.

Cult Movies: Do you remember when you saw your first Ed Wood movie?

Scott Alexander: Yeah I saw it when the Medved brothers were promoting the *Golden Turkey* awards. I saw a triple feature of the three movies, *Glen Or Glenda*, *Plan 9* and *Bride Of The Monster* at the Nuart Theater in '80 or '81. I even got Michael Medved to autograph my *Golden Turkey Award* book.

Larry Karaszewski: I don't remember when I first saw my first Ed Wood film.

SA: You haven't yet.

LK: Scott deals with those things.

SA: Larry's the ideas man.

LK: I do remember the first time that I was aware of them was when I was around 10 or 11 years old in South Bend. My father used to take me to the drive-in to see movies that were coming out and I remember that it was a triple bill and the third film that came on was *Bride Of The Monster*. It was a black and white movie with Bela Lugosi and at that time I was thinking why on earth are they showing this movie in 1972. I think we left half-way through.

SA: Actually I do have a regret about the first time I saw Ed Wood movies. Six months later the Medved brothers bought the three movies back again, this time at the Vista. I remember debating about going, and thinking I just saw them recently so I won't bother. It turns out that Criswell made an appearance that night, just before he died. I could have seen Criswell.

CM: When did you think about making a film about Ed Wood?

SA: At USC in a second-year class on getting grants for movies, you were supposed to come up with a serious topic like, looking at the American



Screenwriters Scott Alexander (left) and Larry Karaszewski.

Indian Today or some important subject worthy of a grant and I proposed an Ed Wood documentary. That was back in '82. The teachers didn't really like it.

LK: We were roommates at the time, so it was one of those things that all during college we would talk about an Ed Wood feature but we just assumed that nobody on planet Earth would ever make this movie.

CM: What was the hardest part about writing the script?

LK: The toughest decision was deciding what period of Ed Wood's life we wanted to do, were we going to do the entire thing? We decided to concentrate on the reason why Ed is famous and those were the movies that he made with Bela Lugosi in the fifties. We decided to go against the bio-pic grain — Why do we need to see when Ed was born? Why do we need to see when he died?

SA: We left out the sixties, we left out the seventies. We just chose the five year Bela period.

LK: And concentrated heavily on that.

SA: We didn't want to just make a movie about making movies. We looked at the three films of Ed Wood we were going to focus on and tried to find all the parallels between them and his life at the time. That dictated the structure of the movie a bit. You would find that the players would parallel



Director Tim Burton on the set with Johnny Depp and Sarah Jessica Parker.

the behind the scenes machinations. So the form would dictate the content.

LK: When we decided to concentrate on these three movies it gave the movie a structure. In reality Ed made *Jailbait* during these years.

SA: He also wrote the *Violent Years*.

LK: But we decided that that got in the way [of our story] so we dismissed that. But what was great about *Glen Or Glenda* was that it was Ed putting his life up on the screen. The art he was creating reflected his own life.

SA: We always joked at the time, we felt a certain frustration that Ed ordered his life incorrectly, in biographical terms. *Glen Or Glenda* should have been the climax. It should have been him expressing the truth to the world — 'this is who I am.' It would have made a better third act.

LK: The movie would have been that this guy is making crappy science fiction horror movies and then he figures it out — 'I've got to tell my own story on film!' But instead he tells his own story first and then goes off into science fiction land. But *Bela* dying during *Plan 9* gave us a nice third act too, we thought.

SA: We really felt strongly about the Ed and Bela relationship and they kinda covered the time period we wanted to cover.

LK: When we hooked up with Tim we even played up Ed and Bela even more because we knew about Tim's relationship with Vincent Price. It really paid off in the sense that Tim could identify with Ed because when Tim first came out to Hollywood he met Vincent Price who he had worshipped as a kid and then he got to work with him in *Edward Scissorhands*, and that movie *Vincent*. So the parallels were obvious. During the first meeting with Tim Burton I literally turned to him and described it as, "Bela and Ed: A Love Story." We really took it as a platonic love story between the older man and the younger man, kind of a mentor/friendship relationship that develops.

SA: To focus on that we might be raked over the coals by fanzines. There were probably a handful of Ed Woods in Bela's life at that time. There was his son and there were a few other guys who did groceries for him, drove him around and helped him out. But for the purpose of our movie these people were irrelevant and they all became Ed Wood.

CM: Did you have to do much research?

LK: We had been talking about doing the movie for 10 years so that everytime there was an article or a book that came out on these people, or a documentary show on these people, we would have it. Danny Peary's books on the *Cult Movies* had great articles on the Ed Wood stuff. There are two Bela biographies and one has a really good interview with Ed Wood where Ed talks about his time with Bela.

SA: We had a lot of copies of old *Cult Movies* issues — *Videosonic Arts* it was called back then, we know our shit — they were doing all those Bela and Ed Wood things. There was Jonathon Ross's *Incredibly Strange Film Show* in the late eighties.



Bride Of The Monster recreated in the film Ed Wood.

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LK: That show had a lot of interviews with some of the people who were still alive and once again this cast of strange characters came alive and made it seem all the more rich.

SA: Especially Paul Marco who gave a very sincere interview about how wonderful Ed was and how terrific the movies are, and when we were pitching this to Tim Burton we showed him the tape and he was really fixated on Paul because he kinda represented the tone we wanted to capture — a loving, deluded, sincerity.

LK: Deluded optimism is what we kept on saying over and over.

SA: It was difficult trying to capture the tone — that funny and sad and endearing quality. Tim more than anything relies on gut instinct and he could sense that we weren't making fun of Ed. He said it would be funny and sad and grand like opera, all at once.

CM: Did your perception of Ed change during the writing?

SA: That happened in the writing of the treatment — we were the guys who had been kicked around because we wrote the *Problem Child* movies so we really empathized with him and saw that to being the key to the movie.

LK: The key to the movie was not making fun of Ed. The key was not "campy," it was not going to be; isn't Ed a silly person in a dress, isn't Ed a silly person for making these movies. It was going to be Ed is just a guy with a dream and wearing a dress is part of that dream, we're not going to play it like Milton Berle. It would be so easy for it to be silly and once again it would be so easy to take pot shots at Ed and his films which is what a lot of these books did.

LK: We wanted to design the movies so that the quality of his films is almost unimportant. It is important in that he can't get work, and that he has to struggle to keep going. People have read the script, and said "Gee he was really a committed artist" and then they see the movies after that and they say "Oh my God he was terrible." But he was still a committed artist.

SA: We never point a finger at that, or say, "You know these movies are really dreadful."

LK: It is the bad guys in our script who are saying the movies are really bad. We always joked

that in the third act the villains are these baptists and everything they say is correct! All they want is a little...

SA: ...continuity...

LK: ...or if someone arrives in day time don't have it be night for no reason.

SA: It's like "Mr. Wood, I don't know much about movie making but the sun was out a second ago."

LK: And so we tried to get the audience to a point where they are thinking those people are really unreasonable. Asking for continuity? Just let Ed make his movie goddamn it.

SA: Even the studio exec comes across as a bad guy just because when Ed gives him a sample of his work, it is of Buffalo superimposed over Bela Lugosi, he doesn't understand what he is looking at.

CM: How difficult was it striking a balance between the narrative and the recreations of Ed's films?

LK: I thought that one of the great things that Tim and the production team did was to find this middle ground between an Ed Wood production and a Tim Burton production. So Tim was able to find a style and a beauty in this starkness and in this black and white.

SA: What we always tried to do, if we were writing a scene recreating an Ed Wood movie, is to try and put some drama in the scene too. Like Ed has to find a check otherwise the guy is going to throw him off the soundstage, so that you could film it all from a third angle. There is the narrative drama going on and then there is an Ed Wood recreation so that life and the art would mix. In the editing there were about 20 minutes of movie that were cut out, just getting to the final cut and hardly any of that is movie making stuff. It is almost all personal scenes, Ed and Dolores scenes, Ed and the gang scenes, so the emphasis of the nuts and bolts behind the scenes is a lot more prevalent than it was in our screenplay. It is a larger percentage of the movie than it was in our script.

LK: The initial reason we didn't want to emphasize recreation all that much was because we thought that it is dangerous for a \$20 million Tim Burton production in 1994 to go and recreate what was done on a shoestring in 1950, people pretending to be bad. When you start doing that, that's when you get to the stage of thinking gosh this is really starting to get coy, or camp, and we didn't really want to do that.

SA: It is a credit to Tim in that the script is really a talking heads movie. There is so much dialogue but because he is Tim Burton he is able to make it visually interesting which you might not have got on a smaller scale.

CM: Do you think there is much of an interest in a bio-pic like this for contemporary audiences?

SA: It certainly has something in common with a million other movies made, a zero becomes a hero, a guy follows his dreams, a Rocky who won't give up, it is one of those kinds of movies.

LK: Also in that Tim Burton-kind-of-theme, it is one of those movies with the outcasts as hero, people who are living on the fringe, people who are rejected by society, those are people who are shown with a lot of affection in this movie. It is no Sylvester Stallone hanging off a mountain, it isn't that kind of a hero.

SA: Hopefully people who see it can identify him as someone who has a dream and is killing himself to make it happen. Even if it is a flawed dream. That has nothing to do with Hollywood. ■



Wood and his players (from left) Cristwell (Jeffrey Jones), Dolores Fuller (Parker), Bela Lugosi (Martin Landau), Wood (Depp), Tor Johnson (George "The Animal" Steele), Paul Marco (Max Casella) and Conrad Brooks (Brent Hinkley).

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Ed Wood: The Last Laugh

by Dale Winogura

One of the satisfying things about Tim Burton's delightfully subversive *Ed Wood* is that one eccentric film-maker pays homage to another genuine eccentric, so both directors in a sense accept and perhaps justify each other's existence.

Of course, there's a world of difference between the quaint black comedy of *Beetlejuice* and the hilarious ineptitude of *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, and certainly *Edward Scissorhands* is a more creative personal fantasy than the semi-autobiographical lunacy of *Glen Or Glenda*. Both embrace the oddities of their characters, and that's what makes them and their work special in their own unique way.

Okay, so Ed Wood was a transvestite with no talent—at least he had infectious enthusiasm and a genuine love for the work (Johnny Depp's boyish optimism and naivete is just right for the part, even if it's a one-dimensional view and likely not true to the way he really was). In interviews Burton seems to be like a spaced-out 1960s hippie, "Hey, man" attitude and all, but he has a spirited affection that comes through his work, and that's another crucial linkage with Wood.

There have been understandable complaints about the film's historical license and inaccuracies—okay, so *Plan 9* was not premiered at the Pantages to a full house. The point is—it should have been. (In fact, Wood's *Bride Of The Monster* was shown at the Pantages on the bottom half of a double bill.)

Ed Wood is not a literal-minded biography. It's a riotous comic fantasy take on a man's life, taking bits and pieces from his past and re-sewing them into a kaleidoscopic crazy quilt that pays fond homage and comes to terms with him.

The major people in Wood's life are given the same understanding and the actors portraying them are obviously sympathetic to Burton's vision. For instance, Sarah Jessica Parker plays



Johnny Depp and Patricia Arquette in *Ed Wood*.

Wood's girlfriend and leading actress, Dolores Fuller, without a trace of condescension or patronage. She takes for granted the fact that she was a bad actress, but also finds the right knowing vulnerability of a woman who's been hurt by the man she loves.

Two of the biggest oddballs, Criswell and Bunny Breckinridge, are likewise affectionate interpretations by Jeffrey Jones and Bill Murray.

But what more can be said of Martin Landau's masterfully powerful and uncanny portrayal of Bela Lugosi. At once sad, pathetic, funny, arrogant, tragic, warm, and commanding, he is the quintessence of the has-been actor fighting his way back to the top against loneliness and drug addiction. His close friendship with Wood is the film's most touching and meaningful aspect, without a trace of cheap sentimentality or solicitude. When Lugosi rips into Karloff or struggles with a fake octopus, no other actor could retain so much dignity and sense of humor. In fact, the movie

becomes a bit anti-climactic after he dies, even though the filming of *Plan 9* is as amusingly energetic and satirical as the rest. If Laudau does not win the Oscar, justice will be betrayed.

The patchy, episodic script by Scott Alexander and Larry Karaszewski is full of anecdotes about Wood's life. However, the loose structure works well as a framework for Burton's offbeat point-of-view about movie makers.

The richly stylized black-and-white images wisely avoid nostalgia, but push the bargain-basement look of 1950s sci-fi potboilers into the realm of artistic beauty. Rarely have the ugly streets of Los Angeles looked so wondrously grungy and decayed, and the white walls of the old buildings seem to match the pasty faces of the characters.

A true movie-buff movie, *Ed Wood* pays loving tribute to all the artistic outcasts and hacks who have created everything from art to junk, from Orson Welles (who appears in a haunting scene, played by Vincent D'Onofrio with spooky likeness) to the only transvestite auteur. If there's one thing that connects them all together it's the sheer egoistic pleasure of being in control, even if it's just illusions. That's perhaps a more satisfying power trip than any other.

This film not only loves the movies but the people who made them, and that's far more important. In a decadent cast-party scene, this idea brought home more forcefully than anything else, in which the strangeness of personality and artistry come together in a mad, nearly-orgiastic riot.

In the production notes, Burton said, "Ed remained true to his work. He didn't let technicalities like visible wires and bad sets distract him from his storytelling. There's a twisted form of integrity to that."

By giving Edward D. Wood, Jr. that same integrity on film, Burton has indeed given him the last laugh. ■

Ed Wood And Orson Welles: Parallel Lives?

by Rudy Minger

1. Orson Welles and Ed Wood both came to Hollywood in their twenties. Welles was 24, Wood was 23.

2. Welles made a black and white silent picture (*Too Much Johnson*) before he made *Citizen Kane*. Wood made a black and white silent picture (*Crossroads Of Laredo*) before he made *Glen Or Glenda*. Both films were shot in 16mm, both films were thought to be lost for many years, and both were eventually rediscovered.

3. *Citizen Kane* and *Glen Or Glenda* both ran into problems with distributors and censorship boards.

4. Both men had tumultuous personal lives, to put it mildly.

5. Welles and Wood both left behind major unfinished projects. Welles left behind *Don Quixote* (started in 1957, unfinished) and Wood left behind *Hellborn* (started 1956, unfinished).

6. Neither Welles or Wood ever really fit into the Hollywood establishment; both became independent filmmakers out of necessity; and both had difficulties raising the money to make their respective offbeat films.

7. Both men acted in their own films.

8. They both worked with a stock company of actors, or tried to. (The Welles stock company is introduced at the end of *Citizen Kane*.)

9. Welles used all sorts of camera tricks, stagecraft, sound effects and lighting effects to disguise how cheaply his films were made (and this includes *Citizen Kane*, made for under \$700,000 which was cheap for a studio picture at the time). Wood used the same tricks but didn't camouflage them as well as Welles.

10. Both have more fame now than when they were alive.

Strange But True



Ed...



...or Orson?

THE DIARIES OF COFFIN JOE

Translated by Andre Barcinski

New York, May 21, 1994 — First day of the Chiller Convention.

Today was a very happy day for me. We went to the Convention, and I couldn't believe the number of fans that showed up to talk to me and to get my autograph. Not even in Brazil fans showed so much happiness in seeing me!

I think now that, if I had moved to the U.S. years ago, I could've had more chances to work and to do the films I wanted to. It was incredible to see all those people talking about my films.

I met some really strange but nice people. Close to our stand there was this guy (*editor's note*: Michael Berryman) who had an incredible face. He is so strange he doesn't even need to use make-up for horror films. He was very polite and we took a lot of pictures together. If he lived in Brazil, I would have certainly used him in my movies in the role of Bruno (*e.n.*: The hunchback assistant from *This Night I Will Possess Your Corpse*). I also met a nice guy who looked like Jesus (*e.n.*: Johnny Legend).

Andre took me for a walk around the stands in the Convention, and I posed for a lot of photos with fans and with some famous people, too. Andre introduced me to a guy, and only 10 minutes later I realized that he was the one who played Darth Vader in *Star Wars*, one of my favorite movies (*e.n.*: David Prowse). I wanted to go back and hug him, but he was gone.

There were some strange fans in the Convention. This guy came up to me and asked me in Spanish if I wanted to go to his house later on for a party, but he and his friends didn't look very normal. I was afraid to go, because who knows what can happen in these crazy parties?

I really enjoyed signing autographs for the fans. I didn't know that here in the U.S. people paid for your autograph. If I had charged for every autograph I ever signed, I would be a millionaire.

New York, May 22 — Second and last day of the Chiller Convention.

Today I almost cried when I received the trophy (Tor Johnson Award, given to Mojica by Kevin Clement, organizer of the Chiller Con). I hadn't received a prize in a while, and this was my first international award since 1978. I didn't expect to win it, so it was a big surprise. The auditorium was packed and everybody cheered me. It was really beautiful.

We had dinner with Uncle Mike (Vraney). The food was good, but the coffee was terrible! Here in the U.S. they serve you a big cup of horrible coffee. In Brazil the coffee is much better and keeps you awake! Uncle Mike said that the Convention was very good and that we made a lot of new friends and customers. Our stand was the most crowded and funnier.

I took pictures with some gorgeous girls in bikinis (The Scream Queens) and they seemed to like me. I like them too.

New York, May 25 — Mojica is in a hotel in the Upper West side of Manhattan.

Today I went to the supermarket to buy some beer and glue, because one of my fingernails broke. I found the beer, but I couldn't find the glue. I tried to talk to the cashier, but she didn't speak Spanish, and I don't speak English, so nobody understood each other. Soon everybody in the supermarket was looking at me and trying to help me find what I wanted. I gestured, showing that I needed to glue my fingernails. The cashier made an "OK" sign, ran to the market and brought me a rope! I said no!



Coffin Joe menaces Becky Sunshine during his visit here.

She ran again and brought me a pair of gloves! I quit!

On my way back, I saw this very beautiful girl, and I thought she was my daughter, Mariliz. She had told me that she was planning to go to the U.S. I ran in her direction, shouting "Mariliz!" The girl turned her face, and when she saw me running in her direction, she started running away, seeming very scared. She called a police officer and he stopped me. A lot of people stopped to see what was going on. I was really scared of going to jail, because I didn't speak English and I didn't even have enough change to call Andre on the phone to help me. Luckily, I had brought a copy of *Cult Movies* with my photo on the cover. I showed the magazine to the police officer, then I opened on a page with a photo of Mariliz, and I pointed to the girl. The police officer was very smart and understood that I had mistook the girl for my daughter.

New York, May 27 — Today I rode for the first time in the subway. It was one of the strangest places I've ever been. The wagon was packed, but nobody looked like an American. It looked like Noah's Ark, with people from all over the world.

New York, June 4 — Mojica did a special appearance at Gary Balaban's film stand, in St. Mark's Place.

I was impressed with the number of fans that showed up at Gary's stand to get my autograph. They all knew my films and asked me things about my career. Some of them said that they wanted to audition for one of my movies, and said that they would do anything I told them to.

One very beautiful girl comes to me saying that she loves me and that she is a sadomasochist. She saw my movies and got very excited. She speaks very bad Spanish, but I can understand her saying that she is a specialist with a whip. I tried to invite her to come over to my hotel, but she was so drunk that she didn't understand anything.

11:30 PM — I am very worried, because I smell smoke in the hotel. I think there is a fire going on. I dress quickly and run to the elevator, holding my pants because I didn't have time to wear my belt. The elevator door opens. There is a very tall transvestite in the elevator, and worse of all, he is Brazilian and recognizes me. I am so nervous with the fire that I let my pants fall to my knees. The guy

thinks that I want something with him, and invites me to his room.

I finally get to the first floor and talk to the manager, but he is really stupid and doesn't know what to do. I run upstairs again, looking for help. When I get close to my room, I smell smoke. I remember that I left a plastic spoon inside the pan that I was using to fry a turkey leg. The spoon melted in the pan, and that is where the smell was coming from.

New York, June 8 — Mojica and Andre Barcinski fly to Los Angeles, to attend a festival of his movies at the Hollywood Moguls and the Horror-Fyi Convention in Glendale.

This was one of the worst flights of my life. There is nothing in the world that scares me more than airplanes. I always have this dream that I am in an airplane that crashes with a meteor.

In the plane we meet Gunnar Hansen, who is a very nice guy. He is also going to the Convention. I can't sleep, because the plane shakes too much and I am in panic. I want to scream, but there are some children in the plane and I don't want to scare them.

We finally arrive at the airport, where Uncle Mike 2 (Michael Copner) is waiting for us. Andre tells me that he is a partner of Buddy (Barnett), who owns one of the biggest memorabilia stores in Los Angeles. I can't wait to visit the "Walk of Fame!" I am just concerned about an earthquake. On the way to his house, Uncle Mike 2 showed us a lot of buildings that were destroyed by the big earthquake, and I was terrified. Now that's horror!

Los Angeles, June 9 — Uncle Mike 2 took us on a trip to Hollywood, where I saw the house where Bela Lugosi used to live, the Chinese Theatre and the "Hollywood" sign. I really enjoyed it, but I was very sad to see the number of movie theatres that had been shut down. They were beautiful! I guess that it's not only in Brazil that theatres are closing. Even here, the capital of cinema, a lot of very nice theatres are closing.

At night, we went to the Hollywood Moguls. There were some fans waiting for me and even some people with videocameras. It was not a fancy place, but I felt at home, because everybody seemed very nice and they were real horror fans. One guy, though, was a pain in the ass: he asked me for 15 autographs! Either his whole family were fans or he was going to sell the autographs.

Los Angeles, June 12 — The Horror-Fi Convention was very nice. I met Bela Lugosi's son, Boris Karloff's daughter and Lon Chaney's grandson. I was also very happy to meet Harry Novak, Barbara Steele and Forrest Ackerman, who I knew from a movie festival in France in 1978.

Our stand at the convention was very funny. Korla Pandit was there wearing his turban and we talked a lot. He seemed very happy because he was talking to this very beautiful blonde girl. The night before, we all went to a Mexican restaurant, where I had a little too much to drink and I started singing along with a trio of Mariachis. It was fun!

I felt bad for Uncle Mike 2, because he hurt his foot and was walking with crutches. He was really nice. He and Buddy took us to a lot of restaurants and even to the airport, when we had to return to New York. I hope that someday they can come to Brazil and stay at my house.

Andre is talking about coming back to the U.S. in May of '95, for the Chiller Convention. I would really like to return, because I made a lot of special friends. I am sure that people really enjoyed meeting me. Maybe, if Uncle Mike releases some more of my movies, I can come back someday... ■

Cult Movies Interview

DAN SONNEY: LAST OF THE 40 THIEVES

INTERVIEWED BY MIKE VRANEY

EDITED BY LISA PETRUCCI

INTRODUCTION BY DAVID F. FRIEDMAN

Unlike so many near-insolvent, anxious aspirants coming to the celluloid citadel, seeking careers, fame and fortune before or behind the cameras, I came to Hollywood, with, for the time, a respectable bankroll, an accumulation of the preceding decade's wages of sin; a high school education in how movies are made; a PhD in how movies are sold and distributed and — a partnership with Dan Sonney.

A partnership with Dan Sonney is an adoption — into the founding, foremost family of flim-flam, an advantageous embracement that conferred, among other rights and privileges, that of prolonged perusal of an unrecorded half-century of theatrical Americana, it becoming my incumbency to chronicle a showbiz dynasty whose presentations ranged from "Dante's Inferno" to "Panties Inferno."

I had little more time than Mike had to get a story from Dan since I was lucky enough to dwell and toil for a quarter-century in "The Land of Milk and Sonney." I hope Mike's following fine interview will whet your appetite for more about the never-ending Sonney saga which continues in, if you'll pardon the plug, my next book, "Kings of Babylon."

— David F. Friedman
July 1994

Mike Vraney: Let's start with your father Louis Sonney.

Dan Sonney: You want to know how my father got started in the business?

MV: Exactly.

DS: Should I go way back to when he was a coal miner?

MV: Yeah!

DS: My name is Dan Sonney. I'm 79 years old and I've been in the theater business practically all my life, raised in it since 1920-21. So I'll tell you how we got in the business. My dad worked in the coal mines since he was 17 years old in Washington. He was big, 6' 3", a very strong young man with a third grade education. He originally came from Italy and as he was growing up, working in the coal mines, he got stronger and stronger. Back then they had contests to see who could load the most coal in an eight hour day. My dad always won the prize, he would load 30 tons of coal, lifting big hunks into this train cart. He did this for a few years and got to be very strong, everybody in the whole county knew about him. When the carnival or circus came to town, there would be the strong man and anybody who could stay in the ring with him for three minutes would get \$50, which was a lot of money back in those days (1918). Everybody would tell my dad to get into the ring with him and my dad would throw the strongman out of the ring, and this was true. So everytime that circus came to town, that act would be taken out of the program because my father always won.

The city of Centralia, Washington heard how strong my father was and hired him to be a policeman to walk on the beat. They put a uniform on him, gave him a billy club, and he thought he was King Tut! He walked the beat for 4 or 5 years until 1921. There was a great, big bandit named Roy Gardner, the smiling, mail train bandit that could escape from almost any prison. In fact, he escaped from McNeal's Island, and my dad happened to capture him when he was walking through town. My dad got \$5,000 reward for this, and that's how we got into show business. It was a big headline deal, like capturing Dillinger. There was a theater man in Longview, Washington who saw the headlines and the notoriety. He came to Centralia and said to my father, "Mr. Sonney, you're very popular because you just captured the bandit. How would you like to go into show business?" My dad

said, "I'll do anything to make a little money!" So this was way back in the silent days, they made a two-reel motion picture reenacting the capture, and that's how Louis Sonney got into show business in 1921.

MV: How did he capture Roy Gardner?

DS: When some bad man is wanted, there are photos of him with his size and weight around town. My dad had one of those wanted posters, and he was walking the beat and saw a man walking towards him all dressed up in a suit with bandages around his head, mouth and eyes. This man walked by my father and when he got about 100 feet away, my father turned around and looked at the man, and the man looked back at him, and dad said to himself, "How in the hell could a man with that many bandages turn his head around and look at me?" My dad followed him to the hotel and asked the clerk what room he had gone to.

He went up there, the door opened, my dad saw a gun on the bed, so he pulled out his own gun and said, "You're Roy Gardner!" The man denied it, but my dad insisted he was Roy Gardner and told him to put his coat on because he was going to take him to jail. All at once Gardner knocked the gun out of my dad's hand, unaware of how strong he was, and my dad wrestled him, hit him on the head with a billy club, handcuffed him and took him to jail. A doctor took the bandages off and it was Roy Gardner!

MV: Wow.

DS: Now that's a true story.

MV: It's great. What happened with the theater man?

DS: That guy made a motion picture two-reeler, and my dad went out on the road with the picture. There were a couple of wax figures, an electric chair with a dummy sitting in it and jail bars. The bars were electrified so you'd get a shock when you touched them, and there were two men standing inside the jail.

MV: Did you're dad believe in capital punishment or the death sentence?

DS: I don't think that he did. But you didn't want to cross him or he'd kill you!

MV: Was this when the name of the roadshow was *March of Crime*?

DS: I don't really know what the hell it was.

MV: Well it might be. I saw *Louis Sonney's Prevention of Crime*, he was also selling a book.

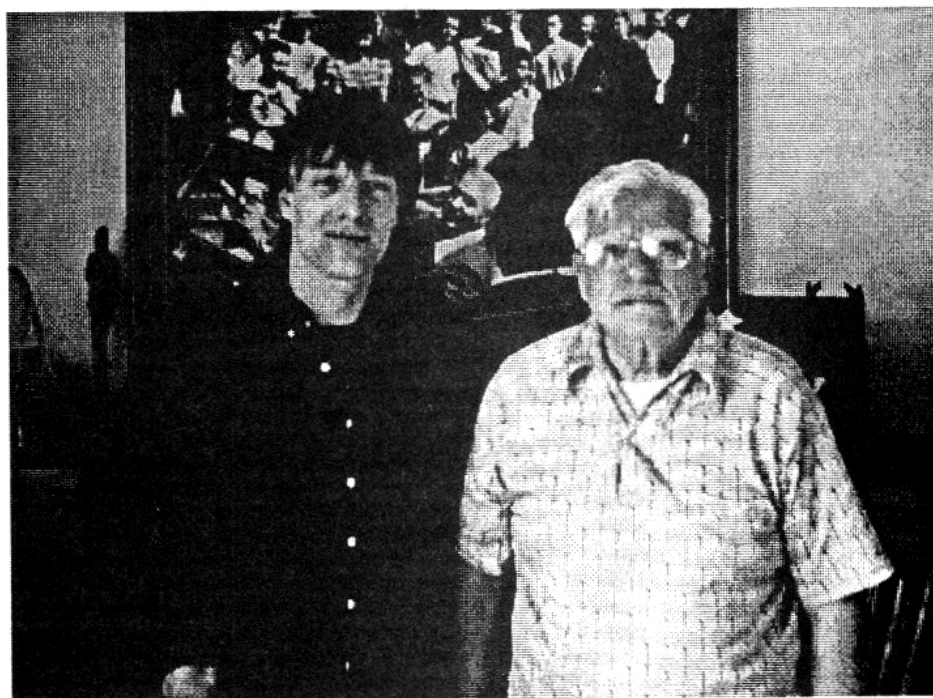
DS: It might have been, that was before my time! I remember a little book which sold for 25 cents.

MV: There was a pitch book for the crime show. I gave one to Dave Friedman, I could kick myself because I loved it. It has a picture of your father with a cowboy hat on.

DS: We had millions of those books!

MV: So your father got the bug and he went on the road with the crime show.

DS: Yeah, he was on the road for years with crime pictures. I was five years old when he started and as I was growing up we had pictures with Clara Bow, capital punishment silent pictures, and others like *Who Shall Take My Life* about a guy who dies in the electric chair. We got into the exploitation picture business when my father was doing shows in a little theater on Broadway or



Mike Vraney with Dan Sonney in January of 1994.



The father, Louis Sonney in his prime.

Main Street in Los Angeles. He was doing just fair business and he used to stand out in front of the theater and handcuff people when they'd touch the electric bars. He'd shake hands with them and all at once put the cuffs on. I still have those handcuffs. He wasn't doing much business, but down the street a block away there were big lines for pictures. He went down there and saw that a picture by Dwayne Esper, *The Seventh Commandment* was playing. That means thou shalt not diddle someone else's wife. You follow? I know it sounds crazy, but they're lining up for this, so my dad went in there and bought half that picture from Esper and that's how we got into the exploitation business.

MV: All of a sudden besides the crime show, Louis added *The Seventh Commandment*?

DS: He never thought about the crime shows anymore. We made pictures like *Maniac*, Dwayne Esper did that one, and it didn't do any business. My dad changed the title to *Sex Maniac* and the people flocked in to see it!

MV: That movie's notorious for the cat eyeball scene.

DS: I found that cat. I was a prop man, real young back then.

MV: Tell me how you found the cat.

DS: Well, when you're making an exploitation picture you have to do things that people will think remember because we didn't have any big movie stars or anything. So this cat only had only one eye, they put a marble in it's eye and the crazy doctor held the cat down and he says "Oh what a gleam, I want to eat it!" and he pops the cat's eye out and you could see the marble go into the guy's mouth. I think people used to throw up! Another scene we got a little pig, it was already dead. In *Curse Of The Ubangi* my dad had a bunch of people dress up like natives. Well anyway, they were supposed to cut off a man's head. A couple of guys made it look like the man was down on the ground, and were going at his head with knives. But it was really the pig's head, it made me sick!

MV: Who were some of the men your dad worked with who made these films? He hired some pretty talented guys like J.D. Kendis.

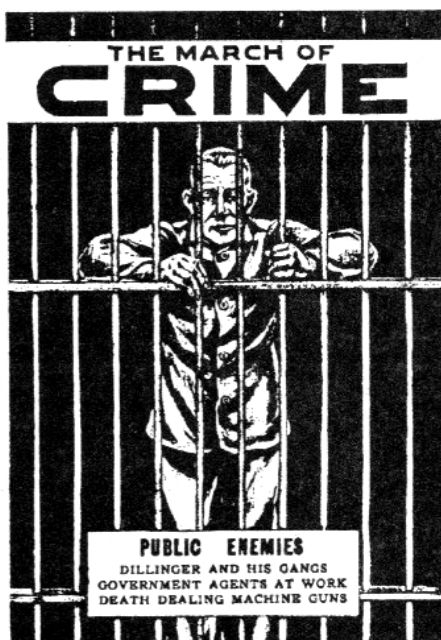
DS: In those days, J.D. Kendis was making his own pictures. He used to be a jeweler in Omaha, Nebraska and moved to Hollywood and started making pictures. He was cousin to some big shot at MGM who advised him alot. Kendis started making pictures and selling states rights, my dad would buy the state's rights, always buying the 13 Western states which we worked in. There was another man named Willis Kent who was making pictures for years. He was in some kind of civil war out here, and this story is from his own mouth so, he was a horse doctor during the war and he had to treat the soldiers when they got wounded, even

though he was a horse doctor. Kent was a good friend of mine and made lots of pretty good pictures, *Ten Nights In A Bar Room*, *Road To Ruin*, *Wages Of Sin*, and he was a real nice guy though hotheaded, you always had to do things his way! The best picture that Kendis made that we made money on was *Gambling With Souls*. That was a pretty good picture. But one picture wasn't enough you know, we'd have an added attraction, a caesarian birth operation to jazz things up a bit. *Modern Motherhood*, *Narcotic*, and *Forbidden Adventure* were Dwayne Esper's; *Girls From The Big House* was J.D. Kendis'; and *The Road To Ruin* was Willis Kent's.

MV: What was the first film that you ever took out on the road on your own?

DS: I started taking them out when I was young. I wasn't too good in school, I was big. I wanted to quit school, so I did in the 11th grade and took Dwayne Esper's *How To Undress In Front Of Your Husband* on the road. I also took out *Guilty Parents* and *Wages Of Sin*, we even roadshowed a picture called *The Life Of Christ*, but we never did much with that one.

MV: Were you selling bibles?



DS: I never was a Dave Friedman out selling bibles! I had a picture called *Are You Fit To Marry?* I think it was *Damaged Goods* retitled. Everytime we didn't have a good title, we'd put another one on it.

MV: So you spent a good portion of the 1930s on the road in those 13 Western states?

DS: I was on the road since I was 17 or 18 years old. My dad had a wax figure show with 150 lifesize wax figures and he would rent a storefront. On one side of the wall he'd put all the outlaws and criminals, and on the other side he'd put the presidents of the United States. I couldn't understand why, but that's the way his mind worked. We put that show on the road. My brother would be in charge, he'd take off their heads and hands and pack them in boxes. It was a big job.

MV: What about Elmer?

DS: Elmer is a real mummy. Elmer McCurdy died way back in the 1800s. When my dad had his wax figure show there was a guy at the Crafts Carnival who had this Elmer McCurdy and some other freaks in his show. He wasn't making any money, so he borrowed \$500 from my father. My father put Elmer, the real mummy, in his wax show and said he'd just borrow him for one month then return it. Well the guy never did come back

for him and we owned Elmer for over 50 years. So my dad got him for \$500. Elmer's now buried in Boot Hill, Oklahoma, they had a hero's burial for him.

MV: I saw Elmer used in one of your featurettes I just had transferred, and the narrator says, "This is a dope fiend. He was taking dope and look what happened to him, he turned into a mummy!"

DS: My dad was pretty good friends with Dwayne Esper and loaned Elmer to him for about 6 months for *Narcotic*. Esper used to tell everyone that he owned Elmer. Even after my dad died and news came out that Elmer had been found, Esper still claimed that he owned it!

MV: So how did Elmer end up in Long Beach after all those years?

DS: My dad had the wax museum and I couldn't be taking it out on the road anymore because I had other things to do. I was with the Pussycat Theater, and I didn't want to deal with those dummies anymore, they were taking up alot of space. I decided to sell them to the Hollywood Wax Museum. I told this high class businessman Mr. Singh, that Elmer was a real mummy. He didn't say anything, he just thought that I was full of shit. I also sold him my dad's big display board with guns and organ boots, an organ boot is something you put on a criminal so he can't run away. It's a big piece of iron that'll break his leg. Those were from the old school. My dad had two 4x8 foot plywoods with a frame and velour inside. It was wired together and would open and different kinds of guns were in there; old and new ones, swords, things like that. I sold all that old carny stuff and he gave me \$10,000 for it, mummy and all. Anyway, my wife and I are eating breakfast and hear on the radio or television that in this wax show, they found a real mummy at the Amusement Pier in Long Beach. I didn't know what was going on because I had sold the mummy to Mr. Singh back in 1978, and now I hear it's in Long Beach. Well they start saying how they want to put the *Six Million Dollar Man* show in there and

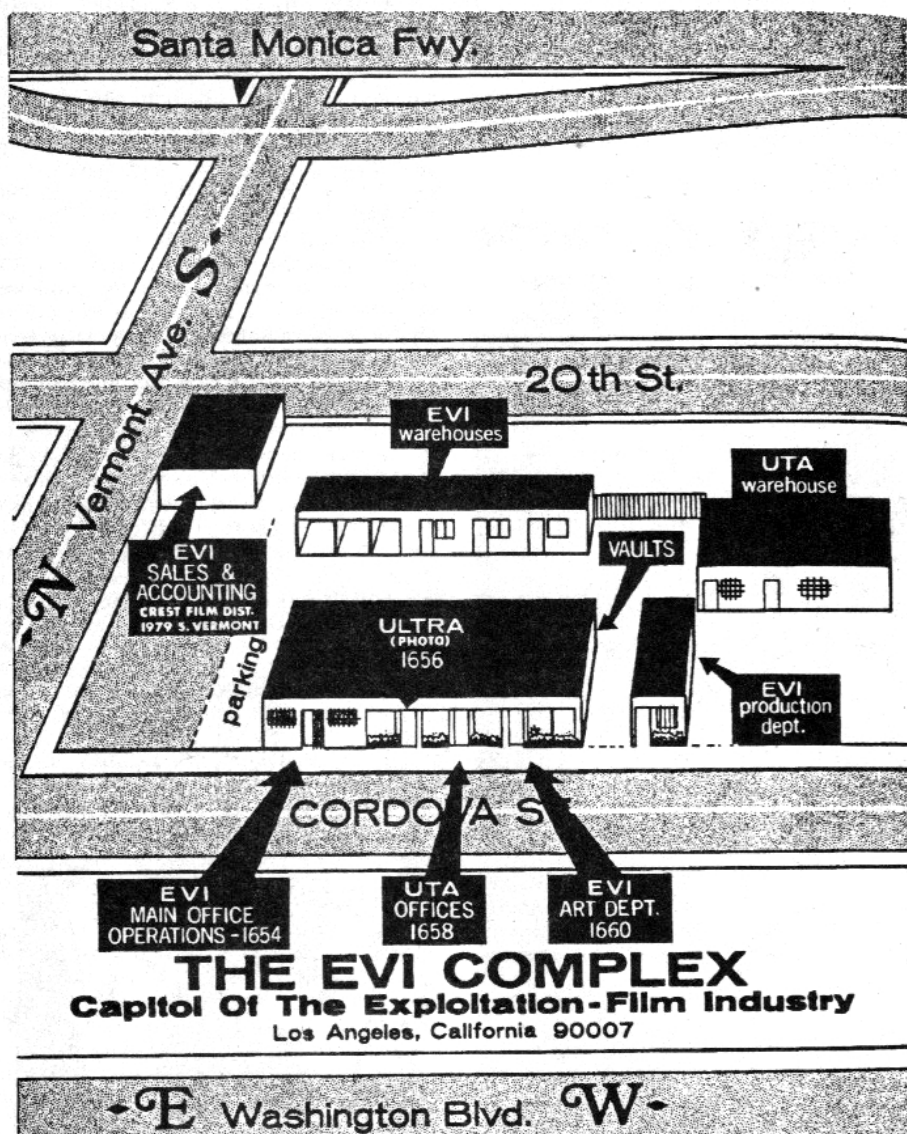
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THE PICTURE THAT DARES
TELL THE TRUTH!

DAMAGED GOODS

LIFE'S
GREATEST
PITFALL EXPOSED!



Above: Elmer, the famous roadshow mummy.
Left: A map of exploitation film row on Cordova Street

moved the mummy from one place to another, and it's arm fell off! They went to put the arm back on and called the coroner in. I said to my wife, "That's Elmer!" Later that afternoon I get a call from the Lieutenant of Police in Long Beach and he asked me if I had heard the news about the mummy. I told him yes and asked why he was calling me. He says, "Well did you know that the mummy had been operated on and sewn back together? Well the coroner found a tag that said Property of Officer Sonney, the man who captured Roy Gardner!" Funny, I've never been listed in the phone book, but when the police want you, they know where to find you! The news caught on and Dave Friedman got into the act, they found out where the mummy originally came from and

interviewed me. Elmer was more alive than ever!

MV: I was surprised to see that Elmer appeared in Dave Friedman's *She Freak*. Lets go back to your roadshow days in the '30s and '40s. During that period, I am interested in the promotion you did for these shows, like a gorilla suit for *Forbidden Adventure*.

DS: Dwayne Esper made *Forbidden Adventure* and he and my dad took it all around and made alot of money with it because Esper really knew how to advertise - he was a real showman. My dad bought the negative from Esper and after the film ran it's course, my dad put his own advertising on it, bought some gorilla suits, and roadshowed it again. The picture did great business even 10 years later!

MV: Some of my favorite photos are of your father in the front seat of a car holding a chain with a gorilla in the back seat.

DS: He died shortly after that.

MV: When did your father set up shop on Cordova Street? Historically it is known as Exploitation Row, the birthplace of all this material.

DS: Film Row was on the corner of Washington and Vermont in Los Angeles. My dad bought a piece of property and he started building a couple of one story buildings there. I think that was around 1948 because he died in 1949. After he died, I went ahead and bought the property next door to the building, and rented it to Buena Vista. Disney was there for a few years too. Everyone who bought motion picture film had to go to Film

Postscript:

Elmer McCurdy Remains an Attraction in Long Beach

A man of small dimensions—5-foot, 3-inch-tall Elmer McCurdy—still looms as a larger than life legend at the Nu-Pike amusement park in Long Beach.

It has been more than a year since the Pike's resident mummy was taken down from his perch in the "Laff in the Dark" funhouse, but his name and memory are as well preserved as he was.

On the doors to the funhouse are bold letters proclaiming, "The Mummy's Hangout."

"That's a symbol of our affection for old Elmer," a park official said.

The bizarre chain of events that led to the identification of McCurdy began Dec. 7, 1976, when an arm fell off of what had been thought to be a wax dummy. A closer look revealed a protruding bone.

It was soon discovered that the dummy was the mummified remains of Elmer McCurdy, an infamous, turn-of-the-century outlaw.

McCurdy was gunned down by a sheriff's posse in 1911 after a train robbery in Oklahoma. Mummified corpses of outlaws were common carnival attractions in the early 1900s.

Elmer went the carnival route and was even sold to a wax museum before ending up the property of the Long Beach Amusement Co.

McCurdy's postmortem wanderings ended on April 22, 1977, when he was finally laid to rest in the Boot Hill section of Summit View Cemetery in Guthrie, Okla.

According to Ed Hathaway, the Nu-Pike superintendent, McCurdy is anything but forgotten.

"You still hear about Elmer all the time around here," Hathaway said. "Parents come on the ride with their children and tell them his tale . . .

"Why, many folks won't even buy a ticket until they're sure this is 'his' funhouse."

—By Michael O'Bourke

Row. I eventually sold that property.

MV: Did you have offices in Portland, Seattle or San Francisco?

DS: You see, when my dad was living, he ran the LA office, my brother Edward ran the San Francisco office and I ran the office in Seattle and Portland. That was the whole West coast. It wasn't a big business and we made a living. I raised my four daughters and things like that.

MV: Tell me the story of how you heard about your father's death.

DS: I had started going on the road and selling states rights. I would go to Chicago and sell to Dave Friedman, and to New York. I had customers there and Texas and so forth. In 1949, I was in Chicago when my dad died. I got a phone call and I said to myself "I lost my boss" and that was it. Willis Kent and I went to the funeral. My dad died in Portland, Oregon. My brother went there to get the body and fly him back, then we had a big funeral. I took over the main office in LA in 1949.

MV: Was your family already living there?

DS: Yes. Before that I used to be in Portland. My dad was getting sick and old so he wanted me to move back to LA in 1948. We moved the family, and I went on to make *Midnight Frolics* in LA, a whole burlesque feature film. It was as if you went to a burlesque theater, but it was on film. There were strippers, comics, everything. I went on the road to sell and in the meantime he died. I ran the office with very little experience, my brother didn't want to run the office. All you have to do is make a motion picture and get your money back. If you don't get your money back, you're out of business. I was pretty lucky. I kept getting my money back.

MV: During that period, films that come to mind are *Dance Hall Racket*...

DS: George Weiss made that one and I got the picture from him.

MV: Do you remember some of the other titles? In the '50s you were doing quite a few burlesque films and exploitation potboilers like *Girl With An Itch* and *The Flesh Merchant*.

DS: Yeah, we were roadshowing *Wild Oats*, that was a good one. Right before my dad died he bought Dwayne Esper out. Esper wanted to retire, so he bought him out lock, stock and barrel. We roadshowed a picture called *The Red Stain* and I used a joke that it was put out by the Kotex people! I thought that was very funny. We also had *Secrets Of A Model*, *A Night At The Follies*, that was a good picture, Evelyn West was the star.

MV: At that time you also had *Striptease Girl* starring Tempest Storm. There seemed to be a big market for the burlesque films.

DS: I had started something new. You see busi-

ness was kind of slow, and I don't know what made me do it, but I started playing midnight shows on Friday and Saturday nights. We did a hell of a business, you could raise the price because it was an adults only show. We advertised the picture for Adults Only, then began running them everyday, and packed them in all the time from then on.

MV: So you pioneered the midnight shows! That's excellent. During this period you also did some featurettes. *A Virgin In Hollywood* was with a good friend of yours Clayton Kirby.

DS: One reel in that film was in 3-D. Clayton was a very smart guy.

MV: He did some beautiful glamour material. *Side Streets Of Hollywood* is also known as *A Virgin In Hollywood*. It was debated that the 3-D segment never existed because *A Virgin In Hollywood* wasn't listed in the 3-D reference book, instead it says "thought to exist, but no proof of this." Since then, I've found two reels of the insert and I got the movie from you. The 3-D footage has been inserted back into it, so the film is complete again.

DS: We used to have boxes of those red and green glasses!

MV: Tell me about Lili St. Cyr. You did *Love Moods*, that was a big deal.

DS: She got \$5,000 for one day's work! She just did her act and we shot it in beautiful color. We filmed Lili St. Cyr because she had just gotten pinched at the Ciro's nightclub on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood. It was in all the news headlines you know. Willis Kent knew I had a little money, so we thought it was a good idea to do a film with her. So I went alone and wrote the checks and he made the picture, I had nothing to do with it really. I never even met the gal, but I was there while they were shooting. I made money on that one, it was only a little featurette, ran about 17 minutes or less. But it was a nice, clean picture, you've seen it. I sold the states rights on it so the other territories could sell it with their units. Every territory had one of the "forty thieves" who sold films.

MV: How about Harry Farros and Broadway Roadshow Productions? I recently met his daughter Lisa through you and Friedman and gained access to his extensive film collection through the family. When did you hook up with him?

DS: I've known Harry since I was about 15 years old. He was from San Francisco and before he owned theaters, he was a candy butcher, you know, going up and down the aisles selling candy in the theaters. His family was originally in the candy business, back in the old days they used to

(continued)



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sell candy outside of the theaters, he was one of the first to bring concessions indoors. His father had a concession in the Lyric Theater in Sacramento. Harry was ten years older than me, born in Greece. When we were together at the Variety Club convention in Greece, he showed me the house where he was born. He got into the business and owned theaters in San Francisco and Oakland. A very smart man indeed. When I was in Portland running theaters for a guy named Leo Pallay, I showed my films there and got 25% commission on the profit. Harry was operating a burlesque theater in San Francisco and had his own performers there. I would try to bring his strippers and comedians up to Portland and paid them more money. So I'd hire some of his people and he'd get mad as hell at me, but we were still always friends. Leo wanted to sell the building we were in for \$25,000 cash and Harry got word of it and called me on the phone and said he was sending a check for \$25,000 (and I hadn't seen that much money at once before!) I made the deal and bought the theater for him. That made him the owner now and I just continued on just the same as usual. We would talk everyday on the phone, he was my new boss. Well, here's how shrewd this guy was. One day he says, "Dan, just tell everyone there to continue doing their acts." Now we were paying the performers more than he was paying them down in San Francisco, Harry was a very cheap guy with wages. So I went to the airport and picked him up and we went to the theater. He knew how much we were paying, he sees the performers and says, "You can stay here as long as you want, make yourselves at home." I'm walking down the aisle with him, I was real young then about 25 years old, and he says to me, "Give those bastards two weeks notice, I'm not paying anybody that much!" I couldn't believe it! So I had to tell them, "You know that bastard Harry Farros just finished saying that you could stay as long as you want, but he just told me to give you two weeks notice!" Another time there was this guy, I can't remember his name and it's too bad because he became real famous. Well in the burlesque theaters they would often play records instead of having an orchestra play while the girls were taking off their clothes. The girls never got completely naked because they'd throw you in jail, so they wore g-strings and pasties. So I hired this guy to sing, he's dead now by the way, and Harry happened to be there at the time during the act. He says to me, "Who's this guy singing?" I told him and he said, "Fire him! Play a record, we don't need a singer!" So I had to fire the guy, that's how cheap Harry was, but he was also the greatest guy in the world!

MV: What movies did he produce through Broadway Roadshow Productions?

DS: After I was in LA, Harry would come to my office and visit, we'd play gin and have lunch together. We got to be close business buddies. I'd make pictures and he'd buy the rights to them for his theaters in San Francisco. He met some of the guys I worked with like George Weiss and started thinking he was smart enough to make his own pictures like *Girl Gang*. He also worked with Lillian Hunt and made burlesque pictures, *B-Girl Rhapsody*, *Everybody's Girl*, *Merry Maids Of The Gayway*, stuff like that. So we got mad at each other and I said to him, "For every picture you make, I'll make two!" He was in the business right up to the end, till he died 5 or 6 years ago.

MV: Being in San Francisco, he must have catered to the biggest burlesque stars; Tempest Storm, Lili St. Cyr...

DS: I don't know, but all I can say is that before he got married every star moved in with him!

MV: His daughter Lisa put it more bluntly when she said to get top billing on the marquee the

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girls had to sleep with him!

DS: He treated them good though! Harry lived with a girl named Alicia for a long time and what she used to do was come out with her whole body painted silver, she was a real draw! Later he married S.S. Millard's daughter. She was six inches taller than him, they had four children and every few years my family would go to San Francisco for their baptisms.

MV: Now *Mau-Mau* — there's a good story. Here's a color feature with Chet Huntley as the narrator. At the time it was very newsworthy.

DS: There was some big leader in Africa who was killing alot of natives, he was just a bad guy. So, Ed Price, who owned the Rambler company in San Bernadino happened to hear that I was in show business and that I had an office. He and

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another fellow named Rock came by and wanted to know if I would take over this movie they had started. I looked at the picture and I didn't see any hot scenes or anything that made it an exploitation film. I went ahead and hired a guy who shot some additional scenes and we filmed some natives in this guy's studio and on Cordova Street, they built a fire and there were topless native girls to spice it up a bit.

MV: Was *Mau-Mau* a money-maker for you?

DS: It did just fair. I can't really say I've ever had a *Gone With The Wind*!

MV: You handled Irving Klaw's material, how did that come about?

DS: He was a guy like me. Irving was in New York, a nice quiet Jewish boy. I guess he got by showing his stuff around New York and back East. I bought the states rights for his pictures from him. The pictures were just fair.

MV: Those were *Teaserama Varietease*, *Buxom Beautease*, *Strippers Parade*...

DS: That's it. Even after I bought the rights I never did anything with them. After he died, his wife got in touch with me to ask if I wanted to buy the negatives so I made a deal with her.

MV: A funny sidenote is that one of the girls in two of the films, Betty Page, is a big cult phenomena now. She has been featured in *Playboy* and even on t.v. When Dave Friedman told me that you had *Teaserama* and *Varietease* in your film vaults and my jaw dropped. It's always more detective work.

DS: I thought I was buying crap!

MV: Dave called me and said that he sent you copies of those movies and you told him, "Dave, they're going to lynch you and Vraney, there's not a tit or ass in the whole damn picture! You guys are crooks!"

DS: That's absolutely right! I can't believe how bad these pictures are and that I made a living off of them!

MV: During the mid-'50s you made some pretty good programmers like *The Flesh Merchant*.

DS: Yeah, that's a nice picture.

MV: You had a flash of bare ass in that one which was daring for that time.

DS: I'm sure it was just a flash. I wouldn't even show a belly-button!

MV: Did any of your films get into major confrontations with the censor boards?

DS: No never. I sold states rights, so it was their responsibility.

MV: Did the Catholic League of Decency ever hit you up?

DS: No I never had any trouble. I always stayed within the law.

MV: Another picture I was impressed with is *Girl With An Itch*.

DS: That was made by my brother's brother-in-law, Dick Crane. How he promoted that movie I'll never know.

MV: I saw Pete Perry's name on it too.

DS: Maybe Pete did something with it, I don't remember. That poor guy, he and I started to work for my dad way back during the Depression. He had just gotten out of the Navy. The thing about Dick Crane, he was a drunk. He'd start with a beer and all that, he couldn't stop it. He finally got married and had ten kids, never did save any money because it always went for liquor or some other gal he slept with. He died about 7 or 8 years ago. But he would always say to me, "I don't understand how you got everything, you're not that much smarter than me!" And I'd say, "You crazy bastard, it's that fifth of scotch you drink everyday!" But he couldn't understand it. He had a good personality, a big handsome guy, but that didn't mean nothing. His worst enemy was making money. He was a good showman, but just as soon as he was making some money, he'd go on a drinking binge and you wouldn't see him. Then he'd come back with a beard and all that.

MV: Another man I'd like to bring up is Kroger Babbs.

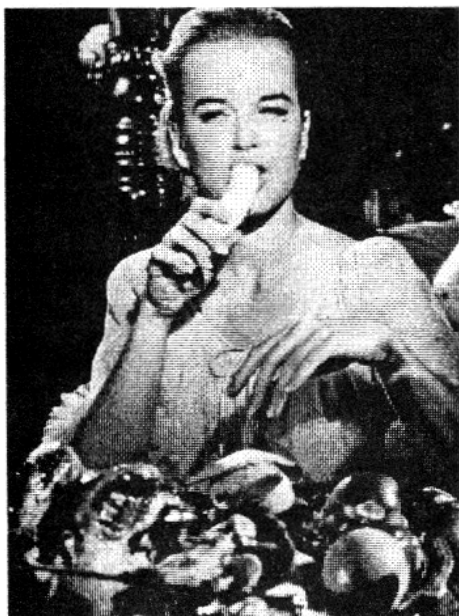
DS: I didn't really know him, but Dave Friedman did. He was a real showman.

MV: Did you ever pick up any of his pictures for the West coast?

DS: No I didn't. I thought that was too high class for me! I stayed away from big stuff, I couldn't stand to make that much money! I'll tell you something about that *Mom And Dad*. There were times when I was showing in towns against that

(continued)





Stacey Walker stars as The Notorious Daughter of Fanny Hill.

picture. When they advertised it, they advertised big, like a circus. They did so much business that the box office windows were broken because everybody would try to get a ticket ahead of time! I give you my word! This is true, didn't Dave tell you about that? I've never had a picture like that.

MV: No I didn't hear about that. You know the scam they had of having the women go into the theater first to watch the movie while the men waited in line. They would have beaten the doors down, all those men saying "Let me in!"

DS: They used to have people faint, and that's why everybody wanted to go into the theater - to see if they'd faint! It's a crazy world we live in. They used to have nurses too. They were really big time, but Kroger Babbs died with nothing, he didn't have any property or anything. He really was a Cecil B. DeMille with this *Mom And Dad*, but the next picture he made was about cosmetics and he lost his ass.

MV: Isn't that's the one where he sold the cosmetics kit for \$10?

DS: Yeah, he went into a partnership with two brothers in Hollywood on that one, but it didn't do any business. Then Kroger went in for a religious picture, retitled it *Prince Of Peace* and it was a huge success.

MV: Did you pay attention to the other "forty thieves," your competition?

DS: I always watched them. I just kept going like a turtle and they were making big money.

MV: I heard all kinds of wonderful stories about the pranks being pulled upon each other. I think one of my favorites was the FBI wanted poster.

DS: Oh yeah. Well that there Dwayne Esper always had a lot of enemies. One was Howard Golden, another big crook whose been dead a hundred years now. I can't understand how the guy lived to be about 96 years old, a Southern gentleman. Golden had a little run in with Esper, so he put out a wanted poster, wanted by the FBI, and sent it to everybody and every theater in the U.S. with his picture on it. It was a real wanted poster. Dwayne Esper got mad at me for this one for some reason. Eventually, my dad bought out Dwayne Esper, then a few years later Esper took the picture "How to Undress in Front of Your Husband" out on the road. Her wanted to go back into business, I guess he didn't want to be retired anymore. He came out with *The Strange Loves Of Hitler* and then had *How To Undress In Front Of*

Your Husband, which we now owned, as an added attraction. We used to get the tear sheets from the news service all over the U.S. and see our pictures playing and ask "Who's got this one?" We called around and found out that Esper was showing them. The picture belonged to us now, he had no rights to it. So I had the sheriff go there and get the print from Dwayne Esper. I never should have done that, my dad wouldn't have done that. Esper turned around and sued me for \$500,000! This was during the Depression when money was money. I fought the case, but it wasn't easy and went on for 5 or 6 years. Good thing I had a smart attorney. Esper had also sold us *Forbidden Adventure* and when he wanted to go back into business, he got another picture called *Ingagi* and made another lawsuit against us claiming that we had taken twenty percent of that film and put it into *Forbidden Adventure*. We didn't have anything to do with cutting the film, but he sued us anyway. After it was all over and we had backed him up against a wall, we found out that he never even owned *Ingagi*, somebody else did! We knew we wouldn't get any money out of it by suing him for attorney's fees, so it was agreed through our attorneys not to

pictures together, one in Sweden and *Knockers Up* with Peter Perry. We also bought a lot of pictures together, *Lunch Wagon* and *Summer Camp*.

MV: You had met Dave Friedman a few years prior to this when he worked with Irv Joseph in Chicago.

DS: I've known Dave a long time. He was making some small pictures, and we never did make a big one let's get that straight. I would buy states rights for my territory from him and vice versa.

MV: So you were handling *Hell Kitten* and *Living Venus*?

DS: I would buy them outright. I had already been in business a long time. I got in touch with Dave, I always liked Dave and I'd been on a couple of conventions with him. If he doesn't know anything about something he'll make it up and make it sound good. So I said to him, "I have a beautiful, big office available."

Come out here and I won't charge you anything for an office, just move right in and we'll make some pictures together. I'll finance them and we'll go fifty fifty." He came to L.A. in 1964, drove out here in a brand new Plymouth with his wife. Later he got into Mercedes and now he's driving Cadillacs. You've seen his picture up there (points) he was in good shape and skinny, now he's got a belly on him!

MV: He told me that when he came to L.A., the first business he had to finish up for you was a nudie-cutie called *My Tale Is Hot* which was notorious because of the ad campaigns that Dave did.

DS: Peter Perry directed that one.

MV: It starred Candy Barr. That's what the ads all said, but it was a burlesque loop of her that was 5 or 6 years old inserted into the movie. Then you and Dave made *The Defilers*.

DS: That was our first picture together. It was a pretty good movie, only cost about \$10,000 to make.

MV: Lee Frost was the director on that one.

DS: He was a nice guy and the best part of Bob Cresse, his partner and boss.

MV: Tell me more stories.

DS: Poor Bea. She's a wonderful lady, my secretary that's been with me since 1953. She came in the office and I used to have a guy named Jessie Goldberg working in there on commission. Everybody called him "Jessie James" Goldberg. He was old, around 70 then and well educated. He was always hanging around the office, selling foreign rights for me and all that. My secretary had quit, so we placed and ad for and Bea answered it. Well my accountant was in the office with me when she came in, so Goldberg interviewed her. He said that I wouldn't keep this girl for a week and that she was nuts. I didn't have anything to do with hiring her, we just needed someone who could type and she was pretty damn good on the typewriter. Well I kept her and I finally got rid of that son of a bitch accountant. I tell Dave all the time "You and I say that Bea's crazy; she's not nuts, you and I are for keeping her!"

MV: During the sixties you and Dave bought a



sue each other ever again. And that's how it ended. That's why when anyone mentions Dwayne Esper, I freeze!

MV: In the early '60s you began making nudie-cuties like *Mr. Peter's Pets* and *Knockers Up*.

DS: Oh yeah, my partner then was Seymour Borde. He's retired now, but his son Mark is still in the business. Seymour used to be the manager of the RKO Film Exchange and then he left and went with Rank Films from England. He rented an office on Cordova Street and we made a couple of



theater on Sunset Boulevard....

DS: It was Fifth and Hill. I owned theaters on Main Street for many years. One day a realtor came to my office and said, "Mr. Sonney, you own the theaters on Main Street and I have this theater for rent on Fifth and Hill. would you like to look at it?" So I asked Dave and we went to see it, there were no seats in the theater, an old wooden floor, no screen, no curtains, just four walls. The guy said he wanted \$500 a month which was very cheap. We thought about it, I knew how to get seats and equipment at a reasonable price, and I had a guy who could install everything. It would cost us each \$2,500 to open the theater. I made a deal with the realtor that we would have a few months to get the theater started before paying any rent. We had to put everything in, it took us about three months to open. I knew a theater near San Diego that was closed and bought equipment from them for \$1,500, and bought seats from another theater in Wilmington for about \$1,000. We ordered a screen and curtains brand new. Then we needed a title for the theater. Dave wrote down a hundred names and none of them worked. We decided to give \$100 to anybody who could name the theater. At that time there was a motion picture, *What's New, Pussycat*. My wife and I went to the movie, and as I was approaching the theater I saw a great big silk valance in front of the Pantages Theater that read *What's New, Pussycat*. I tell my wife, "Honey, I'm going to call that theater the Pussycat Theater." My wife said, "You can't do that because there already is a Pussycat Nightclub." I said, "I don't care if there's a Pussycat Nightclub, there's going to be a Pussycat Theater!" So I go into the office the next day and tell Dave and he says, "I don't know if we can do that, it could be pretty hot." I told him, "Out in front of the best, high class theater in town there's a silk valance that says 'What's New, Pussycat', so we're going to call ours the Pussycat." He agreed. So I went down to the neon place and told them to take off the letters that were already on the theater and put up "Pussycat" in neon on both sides and in front. I wrote him a check for \$1,500 and that was the start of the Pussycat Theater.

MV: That's amazing!

DS: Now I figure, this is true so help me, that God helped give me that name, I give you my word. I walked up to that valance and saw "Pussycat." That name is known around the world now. And Dave, that son of a bitch never did pay me my \$100, be sure to tell him that!

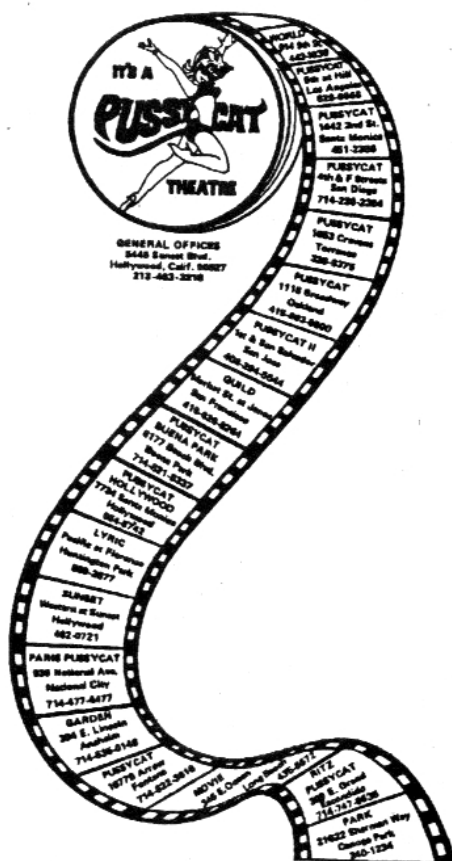
MV: I'll tell him to cough up the money for the name.

DS: Just kidding. Dave's a nice guy.

MV: Tell me about Vince Miranda.

DS: He's the reason I made a little money in my life. So Dave and I were running the theater. Dave's doing the booking and we have an old guy there who used to be with the *Mom And Dad* roadshow. We're just taking in enough money to pay for the advertising, in LA ads are very expensive for one 300 seat theater. We might be spending up to \$500 a week on advertising and that's all our profit gone. By the end of 3 months we haven't made any money. This here Vince Miranda has two theaters, one was the Sunset Theater and the other is the Park Theater in Huntington Park. He's advertising them and I'm sure that he's not making any money either. I called him and told him who I was and said that we are both spending a lot of money on advertising and suggested that if we advertised the three theaters together, we could save some money. He says that he's interested and that he'd like to buy the Pussycat Theater, but he doesn't have any money. But I got ahead of my story. There's another story about Vince Miranda and me. I'm sitting in my office and my secretary sends Vince in. He introduces himself and says

that he just took over the Park Theater and asks if I'd like to buy some of his older pictures for \$100 each. Well as soon as he told me that he was from the Park Theater that threw cold water on the deal because the previous owner of the theater owed me \$500 on back film rentals, so I wasn't too excited to talk to him. Then he offered \$100 a week per picture where before we worked on percentage. I said, "Young man, I'm not interested in that. Woolworth's is down the street, see my competitor." He backed off and thanked me. He started running his own theater, and Dave and I opened the Pussycat, and then Vince made a deal with the



Sunset Theater. So now I'll pick up where we left off. Vince said he'd get back in touch with me in a few months because he thought he'd have the money to buy the Pussycat Theater by then. My brother had just gotten a divorce from his wife, she fell in love with a minister or something, so he came down to L.A. I told my brother that Dave and I owned this theater, but we weren't doing too well and asked if he would like to buy Dave out. He was interested and asked Dave how much he wanted. Well he wanted \$7,500, he'd take a \$5,000 profit and call it even. My brother wrote him a check for \$7,500 and that made my brother and me partners. Now my brother is running the theater and we're not spending any money on advertising. That was where all of our money was going before, so I called my brother everyday and he'd tell me it was too hot or too cold, he'd give me the weather report if you know what I mean. I put up with that for three months. My brother took out \$150 a week salary which was all right with me. I called Vince because I wasn't satisfied with my brother because we weren't making any money. He asked me how much I wanted for the theater. My brother and I had money invested in there now, so my brother wanted \$17,500 for his half of the business. We made a deal, Vince bought my brother's half and I'm still partners with him. Vince started with three theaters, I didn't have

anything to do with it anymore, and he ran them all those years. I forgot to tell you that Vince wanted the name Pussycat for all of his theaters too when he bought half the Pussycat, and I said, "I'll sell you my interest in a streetcar or bus that's going by!" You wouldn't believe the money that came in when *Deep Throat* played there, thousands and thousands of dollars, just like day and night. Just the pleasure of being partners with Vince Miranda was enough, a real gentleman. He and I bought property together, this and that. Isn't that funny how I told him to go to Woolworth's when we first met?

MV: He ended up making you millions of dollars.

DS: That's right!

MV: When did you officially retire from Cordova Street?

DS: I still went to the office for awhile because my checkbook was there.

MV: So who financed all those big pictures like *Trader Hornee*...

DS: Now you're getting towards the end. We had revolving credit with the Bank of America that each of us guaranteed. The production money came from there. Jerry Purcell came into the picture after that. It had been just Dave and me. We had closed Sonney Amusements in those days. We had a partnership, EVI, Entertainment Ventures Incorporated, and later Purcell came into the company. He was a real nice guy, we came with three bank accounts. Everytime we'd make a picture it was much more money now, we'd make trailers for *Trader Hornee*, *Ramrod*, *Brand Of Shame*, *The Headmistress*, *The Notorious Daughter Of Fanny Hill*, that was a real big one. We even got pinched on that one but nothing happened. They lost the case, seized a couple of prints and arrested some managers. They lost the case right here in L.A. around 1965 or '66. We got pinched with *The Defilers*, but won that case too.

MV: That was really early on.

DS: Right here in California at the Pussycat Theater!

MV: You know that poster collection I got from you, those hundreds of one sheets? Well from what I understand, that collection came from your Main Street theaters. I find it interesting that all these producers from all over the country were contacting you and you'd buy one print for Main Street L.A. You built up quite a huge library of film. The paper collection was just a wealth of information, I catalogued it and everything.

DS: The second picture Dave and I made was *A Smell Of Honey, A Swallow Of Brine*...

MV: Which is excellent. It has Stacy Walker in it. She was also in *The Notorious Daughter Of Fanny Hill*. Now tell me about some of these other characters you worked with during that time. You had Bob Cresse in the neighborhood. Here again, were they dealing with Dave instead of you?

DS: Dave was the man, that was it. I think I bought most of Cresse's pictures for Main Street. There's only one Cresse, boy I'm telling you...

MV: I recently interviewed him on the telephone. We talk all the time. I have quite a few of his movies now that he got a hold of for me.

DS: He was a pretty good showman. Cresse calls Dave and me one day asking if we want to be his partners in a theater in Portland. I turns out it's the Star Theatre, the old burlesk theatre that belonged to Harry Farros that I managed when I worked in the shipyards in Portland during the war. Dave and I each put up \$2,500, and each of us has a quarter interest. Cresse and Lee Frost were going to put up the other \$5,000 and each of them was to have a fourth. Dave and I had bigger fish to fry than this one little theatre so we let Cresse handle the whole thing and get it open and run-

(continued)



ning. We didn't pay any attention to it, but Cresse says we need to form a corporation and do this and that and all these things. And I say "For the Star Theatre? Just shovel the shit out of the aisles, get the electricity turned on and get it running." Cresse sends all these papers over to be signed. The corporation is called some long Greek word I never heard of. (Pythagorean Theatres, Inc.) He had an education, that cresse, and he loved to use all these fancy names. He met his match in Dave though, but I'll come to that. The thing gets going and it isn't any big deal. Meanwhile, Leo Pallay and his partners decide to turn the Jefferson Theatre in Portland into an adult house. The Jefferson was a pretty nice theatre. They make a deal with Dave to book and buy for the house. He opens the Jefferson with our show, *The Ramrod*. It grosses 8 or 9 thousand dollars the first week. The Star

hadn't even grossed \$3,000 in one week its first two months. Cresse has some lawyer send Dave and me a telegram telling us some crap about how we've (violated our Fiduciary responsibility to a corporation of which we are directors) and wants us to attend a board of directors meeting of Pyss Ant Theatres or whatever it was. We go to Cresse's office and there's eight people sitting there. I say, who's all these folks? Cresse says they're the other members of the board of directors. I say, are we talking about the Star Theatre in Portland, Oregon? It turned out that Cresse and Lee didn't put up \$2,500 each for their quarter interests, but had put up \$250 apiece and sold six other guys a share at \$750 each. Cresse says that we've acted in bad faith, selling pictures to an opposition theatre and he and his "investors" want to buy me and Dave out. Dave and I agree... Give us back our \$5,000 and it's all yours. He does. The Jefferson continued to do big business. Cresse and his partners tried to run the Star for about 8 months before closing it, but before he did, he was asking Dave to play his pictures in the Jefferson. I said to Dave, "I guess Bobby hasn't got any of that (Fiduciary responsibility) either."

Bob Cresse and Dave were either loving or hating each other, depending on what day it was. Dave acted in some of Bob's pictures (*The Pickup*, *Love Camp 7*) and Bob acted in some of Dave's (*Erotic Adventures Of Zorro*, *Bummer*). They would play cards together. They were both big gamblers. The only difference was, Dave had been around carnivals when he was younger and knew all about shell games, three card monte and other gimmicks. He could do tricks with cards. He knew how to razzle-dazzle Cresse and shamelessly win money from him.

I got into only one other deal with Cresse, with Dave. That was with ECCO. Cresse had been in Europe and come back with an option for the U.S. rights to two Italian movies. They were "mondo" type pictures and pretty good ones. This was just after the time *Mondo Cane* had done all that business. Dave and I each came up with \$12,500, for 50% interest. Cresse was supposed to put up the other \$25,000. Dave pretty smart himself and reads and speaks French or Spanish or one of those languages and thought up the title, ECCO, an Italian word that means "look at this" or something like that. Dave designed the title card (logo) and wrote the key ad line about some kind of orgy. But everytime Dave or I made a suggestion about what we should do with the picture, Cresse would tell us we didn't know anything and to shut up. So again, Dave and I decide to let Cresse do it his way and save ourselves any more headaches. Bob talked some friend of his into buying us out. I was glad to get my money back and never got into any more deals with Cresse outside of buying the Main Street last run LA rights to all his pictures. After he'd finished cutting and scoring ECCO and getting and answer print Bob didn't know anything about selling pictures to major circuits, or theatres



that played regular pictures, not adult pictures. He asked Dave to help him, book the picture which Dave did. Finally he made a deal with AIP to distribute the picture. But somewhere, along the line, he did something that made Dave mad. He shouldn't have done that, because then Dave got him involved in a law suit with the guy who'd bought us out, that cost him 50 or 60 thousand dollars! But they stayed friends all this time, and are still friends today. Dave lives in Alabama and Bobby lives in Miami, but they talk to each other every week. But the stories about those two, I could go on for hours about what they'd do to each other. They were fierce competitors. Vince Miranda said the greatest thing that ever happened to him and Pussycat Theatres was that Dave and Bob tried to outdo each other with every picture.

MV: I've heard *Love Camp 7* stories about him and Friedman that are beyond belief. When did Cordova Street shut down?

DS: I sold the property about five years ago to the Korean Church. They're in the Disney building where our offices were, running a Sunday school.

MV: Dave told me that in the area where Cordova Street is located, the water pressure is such and because film used to be nitrate that's one reason that area became "Film Row" and a storage area.

DS: I don't know. Years ago they had nitrate film and you had to build a nitrate vault, in other words, it was all concrete with steel racks and sprinklers. Those films were like dynamite!

MV: That reminds me of *Hellavision* another one of your films.

DS: That one was my dad's. He got a picture called *Dante's Inferno* from Italy and changed the title to *Hellavision*. I took that one out on the road when I was 17 years old. I tell you, when people left the theater they were satisfied, they didn't know what they had seen! ■

... What Dan didn't tell about our secretary, poor Bea. I called it "The Dan and Bea Show." It played every day on Cordova street. She had a voice so high pitched it could shatter plate-glass windows. Dan took perverse delight in tormenting the woman. She took perverse delight in rattling his cage. Dan knew every burlesk gag line ever said on a stage. Whenever he had an audience in the office, the routine went like this:

"Damn you, Bea. You're trying to give me a heart attack. Bea, you wouldn't make a good whore."

"Don't talk to me like that, Mr. Sonney!" she would scream.

"O.K. Bea. I apologize, you would make a good whore."

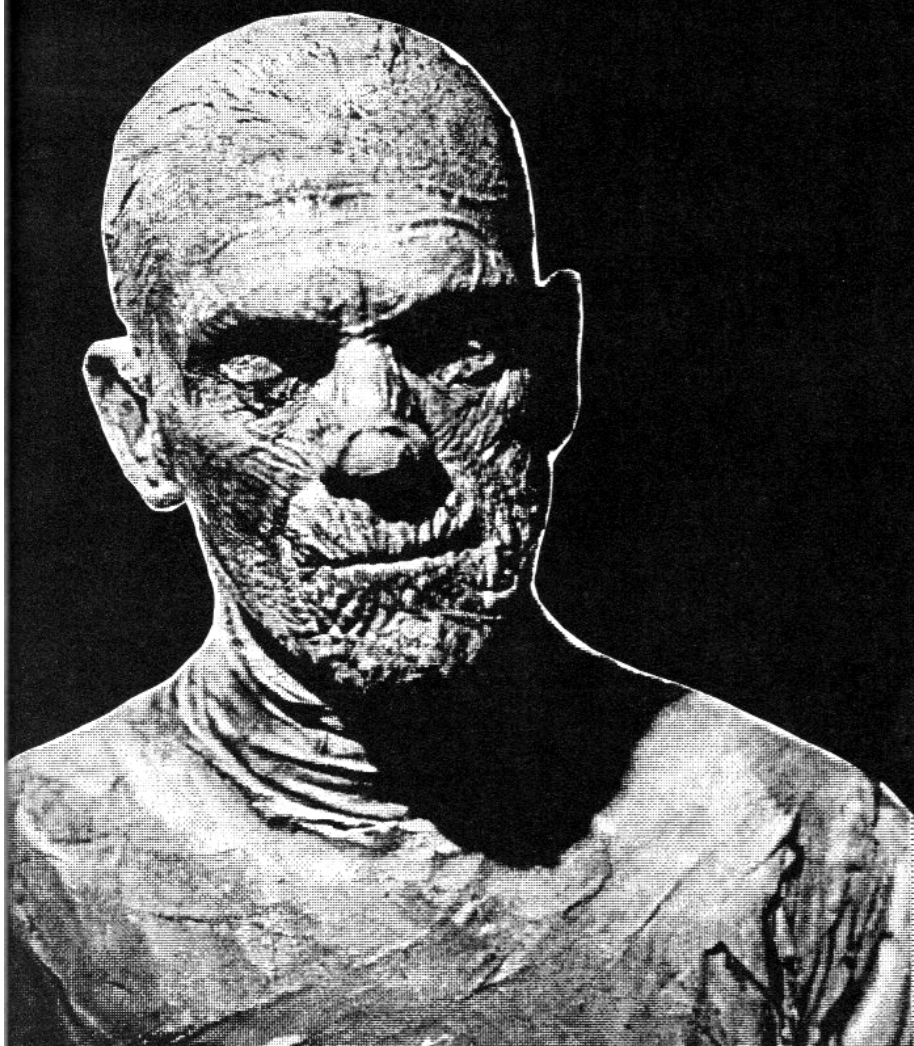
And it happened just like that at least once a month for 25 years. I have witnesses.

— David F. Friedman

MUMMY DEAREST

by Lisa Mitchell

**Retold for the untold thousands
who have begged for the story of
the greatest horror film of the 1930s:
Boris Karloff's *The Mummy*!!!**



"Have we not met before, Miss Grosvenor?"

"I don't think one would forget meeting you, Ardath Bey."

We met him only on film, but we know Helen Grosvenor was right: One does not forget Ardath Bey.

Some people – mostly those who saw *The Mummy* (1932) on a large screen in the simpler, gentler days of its original release – say they were terrified by this mesmerizing man with his bore-holes-through-you eyes and endlessly wrinkled parchment skin. Then there was Bey's alter-ego; the 3700-year-old Im-Ho-Tep, uncannily coming to life in his musty sarcophagus, which also caused a few shudders. (My friend Ray Bradbury was twelve when the film came out. "That was the year I started writing," he told me recently. "Maybe *The Mummy* helped." He went back and saw it again and again, and though he says it scared him, he called it the kind of experience that "made you fearful without destroying you.")

Maybe it's because I saw the film for the first time (and all times thereafter) on the small screen, or that I saw it as an adult, or that I never did swim much in the mainstream when it came to romantic figures – but I not only did not find the ancient Egyptian terrifying, I thought he was sexy.

If I speak of this double-faceted character as though he were real, it is testament to the exquisite performance in the title role by Boris Karloff. *The Mummy* was one of nine pictures released in 1932 in which Karloff appeared (*Frankenstein* was one of fourteen in 1931). It was his first bona fide star vehicle with name-above-the-title-billing – as Universal was now going to cash in on its actor who made such a splash in *Frankenstein*, where the Monster's portrayer was billed only as "?"

Though Karloff would reprise the role of *Frankenstein's* Monster in two more films, he would be the Mummy only once. No *Mummy's Hand* (1940), *Tomb* (1942), *Curse* (1944) or *Ghost* (1944) for him. No garish Hammer technicolor of 1959. Boris was *the Mummy*, preserving his unique allure forever in Karl Freund's moody masterpiece.

As director, Freund, who photographed both *Dracula* (1931) and *Murders In The Rue Morgue* (1932), imbued *The Mummy* with an atmosphere of quiet, rhythmic authenticity. He somehow managed to create an almost impossible combination of expressionism – he was, after all, co-photographer of *Metropolis* (1921) – and reality.

(continued)

The Mummy opens with Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* heard under its title – as did *Dracula* and *Murders In The Rue Morgue*. It may be easy film-library-public domain music, and ethnically illogical, but it feels right: it's plaintive strains conjuring possibilities of curses that may or may not be overcome by love. (Since the Russian tale of Prince Siegfried's love is for a woman trapped in another body – in her case, a swan's – it also makes *Swan Lake* a more appropriate theme for *The Mummy* than for either *Dracula* or *Rue Morgue*.)

As the credits end, we are looking at the intriguing hieroglyphics and painted figures of the Scroll of Thoth, where "the magic words by which Isis raised Osiris from the dead" have been set down. "Death is but the doorway to new life," we read after an invocation to Amon-Ra. "We live today – we shall live again – In many forms shall we return." Immediately the screen is filled with documentary-style footage of the Valley of the Kings, which, along with later shots of the Pyramids and the Cairo Museum, imbue the story itself with an air of credibility. (This was not, incidentally, stock footage. A second unit from Universal's Berlin studio had been sent to Egypt specifically for these scenes.)

Sir Joseph Whemple (Arthur Byron) and Ralph Norton (Bramwell Fletcher) are archaeologists whose 1921 Expedition for the British Museum has unearthed some forbidden treasures: the bandaged form of the 3700 year old Im-Ho-Tep, "High Priest at the Temple of Karnak," and a box containing the sacred Scroll of Thoth. Also present in their hut is a "master of the occult sciences," Dr. Muller "of Vienna" (Edward Van Sloan) who deduced that the mummy of Im-Ho-Tep had been buried alive. "Never saw a mummy like that," Norton says, to which Muller replies, "Neither, I imagine, has anyone else."

True enough. For it is *Karloff* under those wrappings, and, even in this guise, an undercurrent of glamour is felt. When the men ponder what crime Im-Ho-Tep might have committed to warrant such ignominious death and burial, Norton suggests, "maybe he got too gay with the vestal virgins at the Temple;" a sexual association has been made.

Dr. Muller (Van Sloan as everwise as he was as Van Helsing in *Dracula* is less melodramatic in Freund's hands and has the bonus here of a more believable hairline) reads the curse against anyone tampering with the Scroll. When he warns his cohorts to take it seriously, the eager Norton says, "Oh come, Dr. Muller, surely a few thousand years in the earth would take the mumbo jumbo off of any old curse!"

Not quite. While the other men leave to discuss matters in private "out under the stars of Egypt," Norton raids the forbidden box and translates the words of resurrection, which he then reads. Slowly...ever...so...slowly, Boris opens his eyes, frees first one arm and then the other, makes off with the Scroll, and goes "for a little walk," as Norton puts it when he explains the mummy's disappearance as he himself goes mad.

The scene, coming at the top of the film, shows us early on that Freund is going for subtlety and moderation. Knowing what power there is in imagination, he moves his camera around the room like a voyeur most excited by what he doesn't see. And Fletcher, it must be said, is brilliant. He's quite believable in, first his playfulness, then in his going mad – an activity usually ruinous on screen, but here appropriately spooky. (Bradbury, who hadn't seen *The Mummy* in years, was in a video store not long ago and heard Fletcher's laugh – nothing else – from a set on which the movie was playing, and immediately cried out: "The Mummy!")

Fast forward ten years. Archaeologists Frank Whemple (David Manners), who is Sir Joseph's handsome young son, and colleague Professor Pearson (Leonard Mudie), are discouraged by their meager pickings for the British Museum's '32 dig.

Then "a visitor comes up the trail from the Nile." A knock on the door of their hut...and enters the formidable figure of Ardath Bey: "You break your



season's camp, Professor Pearson?... Your expedition has not been a success?" In this brief introduction to Bey, the dye is cast: a mysterious, commanding man of few words and fewer gestures, he is in absolute control.

Bey magnanimously offers the chaps "the most sensational find since Tutankhamon" and shows them where to dig for the tomb of the Princess Anck-es-en-Amon. His princess, the woman he loved so much 3700 years ago, that, upon her death, he stole the Scroll of Thoth to try to bring her back to life.

Footage of "the great find" (the location filmed was actually Red Rock Canyon in California) looks like newsreels of the genuine Tut discoveries in 1922, as does the newspaper story crediting the British Museum. (Small wonder that Universal, hot to follow their successes of *Dracula* and *Frankenstein*, would turn to Egyptian exotica to capitalize on the "Tutmania" that had been sweeping the country.)

Now the mummified body of Bey/Im-Ho-Tep's long-lost love is conveniently available to him in its display case at the Cairo Museum, where we see him standing reverently above it. Suddenly, the scene is overtaken by a camera wipe that carries us across the city – and centuries – to the beautiful young woman on the balcony of a hotel night club.

Helen Grosvenor (Zita Johann) is at a dance, but not of it. The daughter of an English father – the Governor of the Sudan – and an Egyptian mother, she is staying with Dr. Muller and his wife. Her gigantic eyes – so wide apart they seem almost equine, with one on either side of her head – are as troubled as they are beautiful. She is fragile and assertive, sensuous and serious, melancholy and gay – qualities underlined by the lush 1931 waltz, *Beautiful Love*, heard on the soundtrack. (The song has the same bittersweet, haunting air of 1928's *Dream Lover*, which was played in the '70s revival of the stage play of *Dracula*.) Helen and Dr. Muller (he will refer to her as his "most interesting patient") stand gazing out at the pyramids in the sweet Egyptian night. "Is there," he asks, "a view like this in all the world?" "The real Egypt," she answers, then adds, "Are we really in this dreadful modern Cairo?"

By the time Helen agrees to dance with what Muller calls "one of the nice English boys," Bey has set up his incense and Scroll of Thoth back at the museum. Karloff's restrained facial expressions convey his longing more convincingly than any ardent emotional display. Freund's camera (via cinematographer Charles Stumer) moves in conspiratorially

as the kneeling Bey calls to his beloved, "Anck-es-en-Amon... Anck-es-en-Amon..." and Helen is stopped in her tracks. Abruptly abandoning her partner on the dance floor, she walks trance-like from the hotel and takes a cab to the museum – a scene in which Bey's "Ankesenamen!" is intercut with Helen's inevitable "Im-Ho-Tep!"

Frank and Joseph Whemple are leaving the museum just as Helen arrives. They watch as she languorously beats on the museum doors ("I must get in. I must get in!"), and when she faints, take her to the Whemple home. There, on a couch, she mutters something in "the language of ancient Egypt not heard on this earth for 2000 years – and the name of a man unspoken since before the siege of Troy."

While Muller, who came to collect Helen, is in Whemple's office learning about what's been going on, Frank tells Helen she looks like the Princess whose tomb he had recently pillaged. ("How could you do that?" "Had to. Science, you know.") Whemple and Muller go back to the museum where the body of a murdered guard (who interrupted Bey in his ministrations) had been found – along with the Scroll. They return to the Whemple home in time to see Frank leaning over the reclining Helen, kissing her. "The curse has struck her and now through her, it will strike my son," Whemple says, and calls Frank into his office.

Now, Ardath Bey comes to collect his Scroll! After captivating Whemple's Nubian servant (Noble Johnson, who played "Janos, the Black One" in *Murders In The Rue Morgue*), Bey sees Helen alone, asleep in her skimpy, sinewy dress, and is irresistibly drawn to her. When she opens her eyes to find this "stranger" standing above her, there is no fear. She rises, they speak – at first with words ("Have we not met before, Miss Grosvenor?") and then with no need for words. They are found staring into each others' eyes and remain totally oblivious to everyone else as the men return to the room.

The staging of the scene enhances the electricity by not only letting us see a mutual attraction that is almost palpable, we see Frank seeing it too. (The setup is not unlike Samuel S. Hinds's Judge Thatcher observing Bela Lugosi's Dr. Vollin gazing obsessively at Irene Ware's Jean Thatcher in *The Raven*.)

When Muller says that Helen is tired and tells Frank to take her home, she resists. "I was tired," she says, riveted to Bey, "but I have never felt so alive before!" Finally she agrees to go. "Then, Ardath Bey, au revoir," she says, eyebeams unbroken. "But we



must see each other again."

Whemple and Muller are on to Bey; know his true identity as Im-Ho-Tep; know he's after Helen, his reincarnated innamorata. Bey, you can be sure, is not intimidated. "You have studied our ancient art," he says smoothly, "and you know you cannot harm me."

Helen is compelled to visit Bey in his home, where she goes with her dog, who resists the whole idea. (No fool he, for he is soon killed by Bey's white cat, representing the traditionally benevolent cat-got Bast, but here obviously playing against type.) Bey hypnotizes Helen ("I shall awaken memories of love and crime and death") and shows her who she really is by having her look into a small pool.

Here Freund cuts in some stirring flashback sequences: Johann dressed as Anck-es-en-Amon, dying, dead. Boris as the young Im-Ho-Tep, unwrinkled, impassioned, stealing that Scroll of Life to try to resuscitate her, thereby committing sacrilege for which he is buried alive. (The funeral scenes – in Red Rock Canyon again, whose same bluffs you can catch towards the end of 1958's *The Big Country* – are elaborately staged and impressively photographed, particularly the nocturnal procession.)

The magic pool scene was originally longer whereby Bey showed Helen some of her many incarnations since her life in ancient Egypt. Johann filmed episodes as a Christian martyr, a medieval princess, a Viking maiden and Madame Du Barry, but producer, Carl Laemmle, Jr. ordered all of it cut from the final print. (According to a 1984 interview with Johann by Gregory Mank in *Films In Review*, Johann, then eighty, said she had irked Junior Laemmle by telling him she had "had a lousy rotten time at" his studio and did not want him to pick up her option. Freund, Johann said, had made her life "very unpleasant." (Johann – a stage actress of considerable talent who was once married to John Houseman – died in September, 1993.)

The next time Helen goes to Bey, it is near the end of the picture. Joseph Whemple is dead, Frank Whemple almost dies but survives to join Muller in an attempt to rescue Helen from Bey/Im-Ho-Tep's knife of love. If she will but bear a few moments of pain, Bey tells her at the museum all set for sacrifice, he will free her soul from her present body so they can live together eternally. He makes a semi-persuasive case: "No man ever suffered as I have for you." The sentiment is echoed by Helen – dressed again as Anck-es-en-Amon – "No man has ever suffered for

woman as you have for me."

Muller's and Frank's entrance halts Bey's knife at flesh point, and though Bey stops them by thrusting his hand out brandishing his magic ring, Helen/Anck-es-en-Amon runs to a giant statue of Isis and begs to live – "even in this strange new world." The statue's arm moves and zaps Bey/Im-Ho-Tep and the Mummy turns to dust and bones before our eyes.

The ending, I think, is the weakest part of the movie. Oh, I know, even pre-Code, they couldn't release a picture where wrong-doing goes unpunished. Bey *did* murder the senior Whemple, even if he kind of had it coming since it was Whemple who dug up Im-Ho-Tep and the Scroll to begin with – and then there *was* that awful wig. But the way in which Bey/Im-Ho-Tep met his end seems so sudden, fake, what with the statue of Isis raising her hand against him in a *literal* swath of *deus ex machina*. Why would Isis, goddess of Life, kill? Oh well, all we saw ravaged was his physical body. The soul continues – and as the Scroll of Thoth says, "in many forms do we return." Who knows how Im-Ho-Tep could get it together next incarnation. To paraphrase Bela Lugosi's line in *Bowery At Midnight* (1942), "Each lifetime brings its little surprises."

It was also Lugosi – offscreen – who reportedly said, "People, women especially, are not repelled by horror. They are strongly and strangely attracted to it." Though I wouldn't use the *H* word in referring to dear Boris (he preferred "terror" to denote the film genre for which he was most famous), Lugosi's point is well taken. Particularly when the focus is on his character of Dracula (one of the great personality performances in the history of the screen) and Karloff's Mummy.

On the surface, Dracula is the more obvious romantic figure. We see many women around him who have succumbed, or soon will, to his charms – from his Transylvanian "brides" to London girls on the street or in the theatre. Mina and Lucy are fascinated by him – and Lucy is downright smitten. He is, after all, a rich, well-dressed Continental gentleman offering that great seduction cocktail of mystery and flattery. But we see Ardash Bey with only one woman (in no frame of film is he found with even a female extra in the background) – an appropriate dramatic device since all that he had done, all that he is doing, is about his 3,700-year-old love for Anck-es-en-Amon.

Talk about carrying a torch! It is this devotion, this *obsession* that makes Bey so appealing. And

while Dracula *needs* women, plural, for their blood, for his own sustenance, Bey/Im-Ho-Tep loves Anck-es-en-Amon for *herself*; for her soul – and suffered greatly for her sake ("For thy sake I was *buried alive*"). There is something quite touching about Bey's single purposiveness. (Bradbury said that even at twelve, he sensed the great romance – and the great sadness within it – being played out up there on the screen.)

The *Mummy's* theme of one transcendent love lasting through many incarnations is heady stuff and has long been grist for a literary and cinematic mills. The poem by W.F. Henley, *A King In Babylon* ("...I was King in Babylon and you were a Christian slave...") was elaborately dramatized in Cecil B. De Mille's *Male and Female* (1919) starring Gloria Swanson. And Langdon Smith's *Evolution* (Mr. De Mille's favorite poem) – begins its love story even farther back ("When you were a tadpole and I was a fish....").

Considering the differences between Count Dracula and Im-Ho-Tep/Ardath Bey only makes sense because of the many similarities they – and the films in which these characters appear – do share. In *Boris Karloff and His Films* (NY: A.S. Barnes, 1974), Paul M. Jensen writes, "Such doomed figures radiate a hypnotic appeal that captivates the weaker sex; with tortured souls and long, cloudy pasts, they have seen, experienced and suffered all. Face and voice reveal disillusionment of a dangerous, yet refined and inherently noble, individual. Lugosi's personality clearly defined this style, but it is more fully developed in *The Mummy's* script."

Yes, the script – written by John L. Balderston, who had co-written *Dracula* for the American stage – does, as Jensen says, bypass Dracula's "uncinematic theatrical vices." But much of this is due to the difference between *Dracula's* director, Tod Browning's style and Freund's. Though *The Mummy* came out only a year after *Dracula*, for lack of staginess alone, it looks/feels/sounds as though it were made ten years after. *Dracula's* setting is creepier (Transylvania, cobwebbed castles, London after midnight); *The Mummy's* desert atmosphere more exotically erotic (think of *The Sheikh*; *Morocco*.)

That Bey is a 3700 year old Egyptian is no small matter, either. Here is one who came from the rich, advanced civilization (which flourished while many others did not), appearing dressed in a long one-piece garment like a priest, a wizard, a magician – a power figure; a man of authority – next to the smiling, wet-behind-the-ears young Frank. Bey is distinguished, stately, dignified, graceful, erudite, self-possessed, attentive: all very seductive qualities. And he's very bright with immense knowledge – arcane and otherwise. Intelligence, in short, is sexy. (It is with the power of his *mind* that Bey first attracts Helen to him sight unseen.) And if he behaved less than admirably upon occasion, at least he has some legitimate reasons for revenge.

Finally, *The Mummy's* Bey is sexy because of the actor who plays him. For as Freund opted for mood rather than shock, Karloff's Bey is obsessed but controlled. Passion with restraint is also sexy – especially in this day and age. And regardless of how many layers of painted-on cotton cover that face, it is still the smart, sensitive, elegant face of Boris Karloff.

Seeing *The Mummy* over and over on video, it bears scrutiny well. As Calvin Beck wrote in *Heroes of the Horrors* (N.Y.: Collier Books, 1975), "Unquestionably, *The Mummy* withstands the test of time with amazing durability...Even those who have maintained traditional snob attitudes against the (horror) genre have capitulated before the power of *The Mummy*."

Watching Bey's deliberate movements, hearing his cultured, unique Karloffian speech, time and again I discover something new about this enigmatic character and the actor who keeps him from being buried alive in the "dreadful modern Cairo" of today's cinema. Ardash Bey may be ancient, but he can never be old. ■

BORIS KARLOFF: REMEMBERING HIS GENTLE GENIUS

SARA KARLOFF AND CYNTHIA LINDSAY LOOK BACK

Interviewed by Ken Schacter



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Boris Karloff's only daughter, Sara, is joined by Cynthia Lindsay (author of the biography *Dear Boris*) in this exclusive *Cult Movies* interview. Writer and film collector Ken Schacter conducted the interview in June 1994.

Cult Movies: Could you tell us about your childhood and your relationship to both your mother and your father while growing up?

Sara Karloff: I was born in Hollywood and we lived in Beverly Hills, up in Coldwater Canyon, until I was about 7 years old. We lived in a wonderful old Spanish house in which my father ruined his back laying the flagstones for the patio, himself.

When I was a child, it looked like an enormous place, with enormous grounds, the lawn seemed

to be just an unending expanse. I made the mistake of going back in my adult life and it wasn't any bigger than anybody else's lawn (laughs).

Cynthia Lindsay: That house also had a secret room. I know very little about it, except that there was a door that was always kept closed and behind it was a secret room. From what part of history it was I don't know, but there was a secret room and nobody ever went in it.

CM: What did you study in school, and did you find that being the daughter of a celebrity had an effect on the way people treated you?

SK: You bet! (laughs) In school I studied political science, which is almost as practical as acting. And growing up, absolutely, people took note of the name Karloff, and I was the recipient of a lot of practical jokes because of it. And so I developed

the use of some one liners in response.

CM: You spent more time with your mother, Dorothy, after your parents divorced?

SK: We moved to San Francisco when I was 7 years old and my mother remarried and my father remarried, and it was probably the best thing that either one of them ever did. They each had long happy remarriages and I benefitted from it because I had my father and I had my stepfather, who was a wonderful man. I had a great relationship with both.

CM: Did you ever ask your mother or father about why they split up?

SK: I think that's pretty inappropriate for a 7 year old to ask, if you think my father was formidable in makeup, you should have seen my mother out of makeup (laughs). I would never have asked her about that.

CM: Your father was grateful for the part of *Frankenstein's Monster*, which Bela Lugosi turned down, and Lugosi was somewhat resentful toward your father for his success resulting from the role.

SK: That makes good print, I don't know if that is true or not.

CL: I don't believe that's true. Actually, believe it or not, I was riding on the Santa Claus sleigh, with my in-laws, during the Christmas parade on Hollywood Blvd. Boris and Dorothy were there and as we went down Hollywood Blvd, some one was yelling "Boris! Boris!" and it was Lugosi and Boris said "Hey Bela, come on and get up on the sleigh with us." And Bela said, "There's no room, I'll see you later." So I think they were perfectly good friends.

SK: In private they didn't socialize, but my father didn't socialize primarily with actors anyway.

CM: So your father never thought badly of Lugosi?

SK: Oh, heavens no! And I don't think Lugosi resented my father either. I mean, I can't really speak to that point, but I know Bela Jr. and I think both he and I agree that it makes good copy, but I don't think that it's necessarily true.

CL: You know the thing you were asking about the *Monster*, people would say to Boris, who was a superb actor, I saw him in New York in *The Lark* with Julie Harris, and people would say "My God, you're finally over that thing, isn't that wonderful?" and Boris would say, "Don't say a word against the *Monster*, I'd be a totally out of work actor without the old boy so don't knock it." He was very defensive about the *Monster*.

CM: He knew what brought him his success.

CL: Absolutely. He used to go around cutting the roses in his front yard without taking his makeup off, because he was a big gardener. For the neighbors it was quite a scene.

CM: Lugosi was a very flamboyant, outgoing, partying type of individual, while your father seemed to be a more private, easygoing person. Was he like this in real life?

SK: He was a delightful human being. He was a typical English gentleman. He had a marvelous sense of humor, an innate gentleness, he was an avid reader, he was marvelous with children, and he could not be more different than the parts he portrayed.

CL: He was the kindest and dearest human

being that I've ever met. That's why writing the biography (*Dear Boris*) was difficult, because I went to everyone who had known him and everybody said, "What can you say about dear Boris? He was a saint." So it doesn't make much of a book. There was never a bad word mentioned about him.

CM: Your father's family was based in England. Do you have any contact with that branch of the family?

SK: He was the youngest of nine, he left home against his family's wishes to become an actor. I think all of that is pretty well known. My husband and I were over in England for seven weeks this past year and we did as much research as we possibly could trying to trace any of the family. And we did trace his sister's family down to a girl born in 1965, but we've not had any luck locating her. My father wasn't close to his family because he lived here most of the time. And we found a cousin, but we are not quite sure how he is related. Cynthia, on doing the book, did an awful lot of research in Canada, in England, and in India. We are finding it very difficult to locate any family members because England does not have the same sort of social security number or driver's license number checkpoints that you can follow through as you can in this country.

We went through all the records at St. Catherine's House and we went back to the church where his sister had married the vicar; we did all of the things that we could possibly do, but we have had no luck locating the most recently born relatives.

CM: And no one from that branch has ever contacted you?

SK: Never! Not ever! It's very strange.

CM: Your father was a big fan of Cricket.

SK: It was his passion. He was a member of the Hollywood Cricket team and played with C. Aubrey Smith. When we were over in England, we visited the Ken Barrington Center, which is a center for youth activities, and my father's widow had dedicated a practice net there in my father's name. We got to go to the Oval and met a lot of Cricketers and a lot of people involved in Cricket who had known my father. It was indeed a passion of his.



Sara Karloff displays one of only 150 Karloff busts produced in this limited edition.

I was told, when we were there, that one day he was out watching a Cricket match and he looked out over the green and he said, "Indeed, this is Heaven."

CM: When Boris Karloff appeared on *This Is Your Life*, you could see the thrill in his eyes when that Cricket player came out on stage.

SK: Oh yes, it's just like any one of us meeting a



Boris Karloff flanked by wife Evelyn (left) and daughter Sara at Allied Artists on the set of *Frankenstein* 1970.

big Baseball star.

CM: We've heard that Karloff had a lot of pets in his time. Do you have any good stories?

SK: Oh, plenty! I have some wonderful pictures. He and my mother brought the first male Bedlington terrier over from England to the West Coast in the 1930s. And if you don't know what a Bedlington terrier looks like, it looks like a lamb. And we now have a Bedlington terrier that runs our life and actually acted as bridesmaid at Cynthia's wedding.

At one time, I think, my father and mother had 22 dogs. My father wanted to become sort of the gentleman farmer/rancher and I have pictures of him with the turkeys and the ducks and they had a pig named Violet. There's a wonderful poem to Violet, that I have, that was written by a friend of theirs. He loved animals and indeed they did have a lot of them. They had Scotties and West Highland Terriers, but primarily Bedingtons.

CM: What was your favorite animal out of all of those?

SK: I really like Bedingtons; they're nice pets.

CM: Have you seen many of your father's films? And of the ones that you have seen, which ones did you like best?

SK: Well, here comes one of my standard lines: I just don't like scary movies, I leave the room during *Murder, She Wrote*. So I haven't seen very many of his films; I've seen the original *Frankenstein*, I've seen *The Old Dark House*, and I've seen *Targets*, which is my favorite film. My father really enjoyed making that film and really admired Bogdanovich. I want to see *The Body Snatcher*. Everybody says it's one of his finest performances. But, I just don't like frightening films.

CM: Your father's acting roots originated on the stage in Canada, in the '40s he returned to the stage in *Arsenic And Old Lace*, and later had stage successes in *Peter Pan* and *The Lark*. Do you think your father had a greater love for acting on stage or in films or television?

SK: I think that it was just the profession itself he

loved. He had a great regard for the profession, and he loved to work. And I think that there is a totally different chemistry that an actor experiences on stage than in films, and a lot of film actors took a long time to do television. They didn't like it, they didn't get the same chemical reaction.

He loved the profession so much and he had a high regard for television as the coming thing and he did a lot of early television. He also did a lot of children's recordings; he loved anything to do with the industry and he had a great regard for the industry.

CM: Where were you able to see any of his performances on stage?

SK: I saw the *The Lark* and I saw *Peter Pan*. I was supposed to see *Peter Pan* on Broadway in New York and I sprained my ankle chasing a boy across the street so my trip was cancelled. Subsequently, I went to Chicago to see it and he arranged for me to see it from the wings and he later said I paid more attention to Nana, the dog in the play than I did to him. And he said to Cynthia: "I'm afraid Sara Jane just doesn't have the fire in her belly for the theatre. She liked the dog better!"

CM: Now that your stepmother, Evelyn, has passed away we understand that you are taking a very active role in promoting your father's name through merchandising and other means.

SK: My stepmother died in England in June of 1993. There are some ongoing things in England in my father's memory, one being the Ken Barrington Center, there is a charitable trust in England established in my father's name, there are plaques in various places in England to his memory, and in this country I think there's a room in the Actor's Home in his memory.

I'm the only child, so I've assumed the role of managing the commercial affairs of my father. Currently, Bela Lugosi Jr. and Ron Chaney, who is Lon Chaney Jr.'s grandson, and myself through our attorney have petitioned the US Postal Service for a commemorative stamp set series honoring

(continued)



Father and daughter share a moment on the set of *Comedy of Terrors*.

the three of them. We understand it's being presented to the Postal committee, which meets in April of this year. Being presented doesn't mean much, but at least it made it past the initial round

file. We've had a lot of good public support and interest in it. We've had petitions circulating. We're told that it is a two to three year process. But, there is no real time frame on the signatures and there is no number of signatures required. It's simply a matter of our trying to show to the committee, public interest in the project. And as I say, we've had nothing but positive response, but anybody who wants to write to the Postal Committee in Washington DC is free to do so. Or you can write to us at our Post Office Box (See the special petition section accompanying this article-Ed.)

CM: We also understand that a fantastic bronze bust of Boris Karloff is now available.

SK: The sculptor has done the most superb job, it's just an extraordinary bust and I'm doubly delighted with it because I can remember one that used to sit in our home when I was a child and nobody seems to know where it's gone.

The new bust is slightly reminiscent of that same period. I just think it's a superb work and it is going to be done in a limited edition of 150. Wolf's Head Productions is handling the sale of it. It is done on a marble base with a plaque and a letter of authenticity. So, we're excited about that project.

And then we're doing some tacky, awful things

ourselves (laughs). We're doing some t-shirts and some mugs that feature my father's face, out of makeup, in the center surrounded by eleven different makeups of his most famous roles, all by Jack Pierce. It's from a picture signed by Jack Pierce, that I have at home. So we currently have some mugs and T shirts with that image on them for sale.

Yesterday we met with a watch manufacturing company, talking to them about doing a watch. I had an idea, using all four of the characters, and by that I mean The Phantom for Chaney, The Wolfman for Chaney Jr, Dracula for Lugosi, and then Frankenstein for Karloff. And so collectively, the three of us, are doing not only the stamp, but also we are going to come out with some commercial products for the future.

CM: Where can people write to you to find out about these products?

SK: We have a Post Office Box, it is P.O. Box 2424, Rancho Mirage, CA 92270. We are having a great deal of fun and meeting some wonderful people — fans and collectors. Our involvement seems to please them and it allows us some quality control. We work with manufacturers and advertisers on a licensing basis and are very interested in keeping Karloff collectable. ■

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BORIS KARLOFF SCRAPBOOK

On the following pages *Cult Movies* presents a scrapbook of Boris Karloff clippings, quotes, photos and ad mats for your enjoyment. We've also asked several Karloff fans to list their 10 favorite Karloff movies and they have come up with some interesting (and surprising) choices.

Ron Borst's Favorite Karloff Films:

These are my favorite films in which Boris Karloff starred, ranked in order of preference as of August, 1994. I've taken into consideration not only his performances but the overall film as well and have coupled those factors with my own personal prejudices. Hence, factoring in the Karloff portrayals more than I normally would for example, *The Raven* is one of my great favorites, but that's due far more to Lugosi than Karloff; hence, because this list emphasizes Karloff, its ranking is lower than it would be on a Lugosi listing, or favorite horror films listing. *The Body Snatcher* on the other hand, featuring Karloff's best role and performance in any film of the decade makes this listing while it would not even rate a mention in a Lugosi compilation.

1. *Frankenstein*
2. *The Black Cat*
3. *Bride Of Frankenstein*
4. *The Body Snatcher*
5. *The Mask Of Dr. Fu Manchu*
6. *The Black Room*
7. *The Raven* (1935)
8. *The Invisible Ray*
9. *Son Of Frankenstein*
10. *The Old Dark House*

Ken Schacter's Top Ten Karloff Films

1. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: The perfect classic horror film. The height of the Universal horror films, combines the great direction of James Whale, the unmatched photographic imagery of John Mescall, and the classic music score by Franz Waxman. Karloff adds new characteristics to his role as the Monster that brings out new emotions from the creature. This is the one Karloff film that I can watch over and over.
2. *The Body Snatcher*: Possibly Val Lewton's best film, Karloff and Daniell both shine in two of the finest roles of their lives. Unlike many films of today, *The Body Snatcher* delivers right to the end, with a finish to remember.
3. *Frankenstein*: Still to this day the best adaptation of the Mary Shelley novel to the screen. After so many years of acting on the stage and screen, Boris got his break that changed his career with his creation of the monster. *Frankenstein* is not far behind *Bride Of Frankenstein* as the perfect horror film.
4. *The Black Room*: Although a rarely seen Karloff film, *The Black Room* stands out not only as a classic horror film but also one of Boris Karloff's most powerful and accomplished acting feats.
5. *The Mummy*: Still the king of all the Mummy films. A class 'A' production with a solid Karloff role. Jack Pierce outdoes himself, setting the standard for Mummy makeup.
6. *Tower Of London*: A very underrated film. Karloff and Rathbone give equally menacing performances in this classic tale of Richard III. If you like historical dramas with a twist of the macabre, then you will love this film.
7. *The Black Cat*: One of the cultiest of all Karloff films, *The Black Cat* has an allegiance of fans that goes beyond your average horror enthusiast. Both Karloff and Lugosi play extremely well against each other in this tale of human degradation. This

This 'monster' takes a look at himself

It's
Boris
Karloff

HE is such a distinguished English gentleman. He watches nearly every ball that's bowled at the Oval, and after cricket the thing that occupies his thoughts is a glass of draught beer.

The name is Mr. William Henry Pratt, alias Mr. Boris Karloff, of Hollywood, California.

For nearly 20 years Mr. Karloff has had a nice monopoly in the monster business.

Now he couldn't care less about the brutes.

"I saw their limitations from the first," he confessed to me in that dark, brown, 'cello voice, when I called on the Karloffs in London the other day.

"I should have liked to have given them up years ago. Trouble is they would not leave me."

In fact, he played the famous screen Frankenstein only three times.

"After that Bela Lugosi took over, then Lon Chaney, then a cowboy they dressed up for the part.

"But the fan letters still come to me. I should have gone on with it. At least they would have paid me."

Now he plays the odd horror man in films. He is "Mr. Hyde," in a new film and he has played Rasputin on American TV. Yesterday he left for Italy to play—another horror role!

Diluted horror

But he dilutes the strychnine by telling bedtime stories to the kiddies on the New York radio.

And now he has reached a ripe and relaxed 65 he makes a definite rule that nothing shall keep him away from England during the cricket season.

He left England in 1909 to act in Canada. Since then, he reckoned up, he has not spent more than a year here.

Yet the accent is still as impeccable as it was when he left Uppingham. So is the Savile-row cut of his clothes.

English Mrs. Karloff, his second wife, whom he married



BORIS KARLOFF—"I should have given them up years ago —"

seven years ago, is already more American. "She says tomatoyto: I say tomahto," he said.

Nowadays they have moved their base from the Californian coast to New York.

"The opportunities on radio and TV there forced us to," he says. "For I am not past learning, you know. The old dog must learn new tricks."

"This spring I made my debut as a singer for the first time. And you should have seen the dance routine I did in a boater and blazer on TV."

The telephone rang. It was a call from his agent about this new film part in Italy.

Now that cricket is nearly over it sounded all right. The details were almost fixed.

"What is the part?" I asked.

"I really haven't the slightest idea—something horrible I expect," said Mr. Karloff with a charming, unmonstrous smile.

AMY LANDRETH



"—Trouble is they would not leave me."

RETURN OF THE KARLOFFS



Genial smile from film actor Boris Karloff as he arrives with his wife in London today

from New York, where he has been making TV films.

**LOOK and
LISTEN**

KARLOFF CAN GET SCARED, TOO!

by EMERY BEARCE

BORIS KARLOFF, who is really a gentle soul who loves reading history books and playing the piano, goes through life playing the part of a professional monster who gives people nightmares. When the BBC asked him to choose and star in a play, Boris chose "Hanging Judge" (*Light, 8.30 p.m.*).

He plays the part of a double-life judge who is ruthless. "I'd like to play a benevolent part, really, like 'Mr. Chips,' but everybody expects me to be horrible," said Boris.

I was happy to find that Frankenstein Karloff admits to being scared during late-night radio murder mysteries.



Boris Karloff

A NEW 'X' IS ON THE WAY

Boris Karloff leaves



Mr. William Pratt—Boris Karloff, the actor—leaves London Airport with his wife for Rome. He is to make a film in Italy after a two-month visit to England to see the Test matches.

ES 28 AUG 1953



Boris Karloff flies into London Airport with his wife today from New York.

"It's no accident that I am just in time for the cricket season," explained the 70-year-old actor. "I have given up playing, but I watch it all the time."

He is here for about six weeks and will make a new "X" horror film. Mr. Karloff was last here in October, when he made *The Grip of the Strangler*.

When is he retiring? "I don't think I am. I enjoy working far too much," he said.

film is pure, sick fun.

8. *The Invisible Ray*: One of the earliest classic sci-fi films, Karloff gives the best of his misunderstood good doctor turned demented doctor roles. He would later repeat this role many times at Columbia Studios.

9. *The Lost Patrol*: One of the few films without any women in it. Karloff, although a bit hammy at times, really plays the religious fanatic to the hilt. I enjoy Karloff's performance so much that I would have followed him into the desert of death.

10. *The Raven* (1963): No that is not a misprint folks. Although I enjoy the 1935 film, it is more of a Lugosi film than a Karloff film. The 1963 film is such a good time. Not only does the viewer sense Karloff, Price and Lorre enjoying themselves but that the cast and crew had a great time making this film.

Mario Toland's Karloff Favorites

1. *The Body Snatcher*
2. *The Mummy*
3. *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*
4. *Frankenstein*
5. *The Black Cat*
6. *Targets*
7. *Bride Of Frankenstein*
8. *Bedlam*
9. *The Black Room*
10. *The Raven* (1963)

10 Favorite Karloff films by John Norris

1. *Frankenstein*: Karloff's original performance as the monster stands as his greatest role. He never looked better in the makeup.

2. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: Karloff and Universal outdid themselves with this one. The monster even drinks wine and smokes cigars. This is Karloff's tour de force monster performance.

3. *The Mummy*: Karloff is genuinely creepy as Ardath Bey and makes a wonderful "wrapped" Im-Ho-Tep. To me, this film is Karloff's *Dracula*.

4. *The Body Snatcher*: Karloff's Cabman Grey is a masterpiece of period horror and a wonderful performance.

5. *The Black Cat*: Although Lugosi has the pivotal role in this one, Karloff's Poelzig is the epitome of villainess and quiet evil. Look for Bela skinning Karloff alive at the film's end.

6. *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*: Although I find this film generally weak, Karloff masterfully essays this role of the mad Oriental whose sadistic doings are seldom equalled.

7. *Charlie Chan At The Opera*: This is one of the best Chan films and even though the singing voice used is obviously not Boris, Karloff is great as Gravelle, the opera star. A lot of atmosphere helps make this film memorable.

8. *Dick Tracy Vs. Gruesome*: This is a neat Dick Tracy from RKO's B department. Boris has a good time as Gruesome, one of Tracy's memorable enemies. Fast moving and fun to watch, I like this one.

9. *The Devil Commands*: I like this the best of Karloff's B scientist roles. While he usually walks through such films, Boris gives a strong performance here as a doctor obsessed with contacting his dead wife.

10. *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*: This Christmas cartoon just wouldn't be the same without Boris' narration and voice of the Grinch.

Forry Ackerman's Favorite Karloff films.

1. *Frankenstein*
2. *Bride Of Frankenstein*
3. *The Man Who Lived Again*

4. *The Mummy*
5. *The Ghoul*
6. *The Raven* (1935)
7. *The Black Cat*
8. *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*
9. *The Old Dark House*
10. *Targets*

Karloff's Top Ten by Michael Brumas

1. *The Black Cat*: Lugosi refers to the title character as "the living embodiment of evil" even with Karloff's sinister Hjalmer Poelzig lurking menacingly in the background. An art deco masterpiece and the most electric pairing of any two horror superstars ever.

2. *Frankenstein*: *Bride* wins most of the plaudits these days although Karloff saw a more forceful simplicity in the original. He might have been right.

3. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: Still a contender. Director James Whale at his wittiest and most ornate.

4. *The Body Snatcher*: One of the least cinematic but somehow the most satisfying of the Val Lewton horrors. Karloff and, of course, Henry Daniell were equally superb.

5. *The Black Room*: Karloff's flamboyant dual role and Columbia's sumptuous grade B production values went largely unnoticed in 1935 but the movie seems to get better with each passing year.

6. *Son Of Frankenstein*: Karloff's lumbering, half comatose brute fits in well with Rathbone's and Lugosi's hamming and the rock-solid production values. Too good to be called a production designer's movie.

7. *Bedlam*: Karloff knew a good script when he saw one and was clearly relishing his role as the evil Master Sims. Much underrated.

8. *The Mummy*: Even hard-to-please Pauline Kael recognized this as a horror masterpiece. Stylish and haunting despite its stodgy *Dracula*-like pacing.

9. *The Walking Dead*: The most persuasive of Karloff's many trips to the death house thanks to a sensitive script and Michael Curtiz's moody direction.

10. *The Old Dark House*: Karloff is a bit of a casualty, stuck with a thankless role in a topnotch ensemble cast. But Whale's ubiquitous style steals the show, anyway.

Joe O'Brien's 10 Favorite Karloff Films.

1. *Frankenstein*
2. *Bride Of Frankenstein*
3. *The Mummy*
4. *The Black Cat*
5. *House Of Frankenstein*
6. *Corridors Of Blood*
7. *Son Of Frankenstein*
8. *The Walking Dead*
9. *Night Key*
10. *Comedy Of Terrors*

Jan Alan Henderson's Top Ten Boris Karloff Films

1. *Frankenstein*: Before the 1986 MCA reissue of this Boris breakthrough flick, this would not have been my first choice on a Karloff top ten list. *Bride of Frankenstein* would have been in the number one slot, hands down! But with this re-release (95% complete- there's a graveyard scene missing from the beginning), one can finally enjoy the majesty and power of this classic.

2. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: This show is often heralded as the perfect horror film, and you'll get no argument on that score here. More a fractured fairy tale than a terror flick, *Bride* has all the

elements that make the 30s horror genre as popular today as when these were first released. Boris and director James Whale deliver a blend of horror, irreverent comedy and mystery that has not been equalled to this day.

3. *The Mummy*: Most actors would be satisfied to have originated one classic role in their careers, but Boris hit the mark again in 1932 with his characterization of Im-Ho-Tep. In essence, this is Karloff doing *Dracula* in Egypt. Karloff trades in Lugosi's coffin for a sarcophagus. Boris turns in his most sensual performance. In fact, *The Mummy* oozes with sex (in a crumbly sort of way). For a Karloff fan this one is a must!

4. *The Black Cat*: Without doubt Karloff's most evil role! Boris plays a suave cold-hearted bastard in this tale that has nothing to do with Edgar Allan Poe. Oh yeah- there's a black cat in the film! Karloff and Lugosi's best pairing.

5. *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*: Here's the finest screen Fu Manchu adaptation ever! Karloff's essay of this oriental villain is sadistic, and true to Sax Rohmer's character. Myrna Loy is delectable as Fu Manchu's obedient daughter, and the rest of the cast is highly effective.

6. *The Invisible Ray*: Here Karloff gives a restrained, yet driven performance as scientist Janos Rukh. Not quite the sadistic menace he was in *The Black Cat*, Karloff projects Rukh as a lonely, tragic figure. Great support from Bela and the rest of the cast.

7. *The Old Dark House*, *Son Of Frankenstein*, *The Raven* (1935): Three way tie on these babies, *Old Dark House* and *Son Of Frankenstein* are ensemble pieces, and Lugosi steals *Son Of Frankenstein* and *The Raven*. *Old Dark House* is the weakest — not because of Karloff, but because there is not enough Boris. These three films are loaded with atmosphere. Not a bummer in the bunch!

8. *The Walking Dead*: A Karloff tear jerker! Bad guy Ricardo Cortez frames Karloff for a murder, and Boris is brought back to life by Edmund Gwen. Not vital, but good fun.

9. *The Devil Commands*: Karloff is a workaholic scientist hellbent on contacting the spirit of his recently dead wife, by plunging cadavers into the Columbia special effects department's breaker boards. And oh, what a shock Boris gets, along with the audience! Karloff's character (Dr. Julian Blair) is the most depressed Karloff character to hit the screen. Strangely compelling!

10. *Night Key*: Cult Movies late great friend John Andrews turned me on to this show. Boris as a blind old codger with berserk burglar alarm systems in a fun piece of fodder.

Morris Vescovi's 10 Karloff Favorites.

1. *Bride Of Frankenstein*
2. *The Mummy*
3. *The Body Snatcher*
4. *Frankenstein*
5. *The Black Cat*
6. *Comedy Of Terrors*
7. *The Incredible Dr. Markeson* (Thriller tv episode)
8. *The Lost Patrol*
9. *The Raven* (1935) & (1963) Tie.
10. *The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty*

Favorite Karloff performances from Greg Mank.

1. *Bride Of Frankenstein*
2. *Frankenstein*
3. *The Body Snatcher*
4. *The Mummy*
5. *The Black Cat*
6. *The Walking Dead*
7. *Targets*

8. *The Black Room*
9. *The Lost Patrol*
10. *Five Star Final*
(runners-up: *The Haunted Strangler*; 1963's *The Raven*)

Tom Weaver: These are my ten favorite Karloff films, in no order other than alphabetical

1. *Bedlam*: I like some of Martin Scorsese's movies very much, but I'm not sure how his planned remake can top this.

2. *The Body Snatcher*: Danny Peary made the case that Karloff deserved an Oscar nomination for this role. I couldn't agree more.

3. *The Black Cat*: The story's sort of a mess and the comic relief is tough to sit through, but it's got Boris and Bela in their prime and at or near their best. Excellent sets, photography and score.

4. *The Black Room*: Best ever dual-role performance by a horror star. (Maybe the only good dual-role performance by a horror star.) Great story, direction, camerawork, sets, music. Everything's right.

5. *Frankenstein & Bride Of Frankenstein*: Since *Bride* picks up exactly where *Frankenstein* left off, I'm listing these two movie as one of my ten choices. It's cheating, I know, but I have 11 favorites. *Son Of Frankenstein* you can have.

6. *The Man They Could Not Hang*: A guilty favorite. I have a great fondness for good Karloff performances, zippy B-movie pacing and clever plots. This one has all three.

7. *The Man Who Lived Again*: I'm listing this (a) because I do think it's Karloff's best mad doctor movie and (b) because I've got a suspicion that if I don't mention it nobody will.

8. *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*: Karloff didn't like it but I do. It's fast moving, campy and politically incorrect, and I think Karloff's very enjoyable in it. I just wish he had a better death scene. (Charles Starrett runs in, clobbers him with a sword and runs away.)

9. *Mr. Wong, Detective*: Just kidding!

9. *The Mummy*: Like the *Frankenstein* films, this one really doesn't need to be justified.

10. *The Old Dark House*: James Whale's one horror film where the humor is actually humorous. The movie's so much fun, and Karloff's got so much presence, that you almost don't notice what a crummy role it is for him.

As much as I poke fun at Karloff's bad performances, no other horror star made ten films that are this good. In fact, I'm not sure that any other horror star was in 10 great horror films.

Honorable mentions: *Scarface*, *The House Of Rothschild*, *The Invisible Ray*, *The Walking Dead*, *The Devil Commands*, *The Haunted Strangler*, *Targets*.

10 Favorite Karloff Films by Glenn L. Damato

1. *Frankenstein*: Scoreless and all, still the best of the old classics. Karloff's never been better.

2. *The Black Cat*: Primo Boris and Bela way too much to resist. Hjalmer Poelzig is one of the most sinister villains ever.

3. *The Raven* (1935): The two horror kings combine again for the best paced chiller of the decade. Sheer entertainment!

4. *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*: From the days when films were pure fun! Pulp with a high budget & a bravura performance by Karloff-see it on the BIG screen!

5. *The Mummy*: A little slow, not enough action, but some wild scenes and the first look at Jack Pierce's fab makeup.

6. *The Old Dark House*: Whale was right on the money with this one. Show it to your Uncle Joe

Finally, it's our entire selection of fabulous Nudie-Cuties! Thrill and delight to the wacky antics of peeping toms and bodacious bouncing babes during the days when a little t&a was enough to titillate and excite!

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CURSE of the ALTER MUMMY

Monsters? The

BORIS KARLOFF, the kindly Englishman whose name still strikes a thrill of terror and whose best friend is a monster, admits that he hasn't seen any of the modern horror films.

But he doubts if they are as terrifying to youngsters as adults fear.

When he played the monster in the Frankenstein films of the 'thirties, the bulk of his fan mail came from children. All of them sympathetic to the monster.

"The kids would express great compassion for the poor fellow. They saw right through the 'horror.' If you like to call it that, and realised that the monster was just a pathetic victim of circumstances. They loved him.

SENSIBLE

"Children are so much more sensible than we realise. They see things more clearly. I don't think I ever shocked or frightened them!"

Hard to believe that Boris Karloff could ever have given anyone the

children love them



says **BORIS KARLOFF**

(INTERVIEWED BY SHEILA JENNER)

slightest tingle of fear. He is a tall, handsome man of 75, mild, benign . . . everyone's ideal of a favourite uncle.

After almost 50 years in America he has just returned with his wife Evie to England to live, because, he says simply: "I wouldn't have been happy if I had died abroad." He is still working and appears on ITV

next week as a menacing gang boss in the Dickie Henderson comedy series.

Acting, he says, has brought him a wonderful life and he is sympathetic with the hopefuls who beseege him for advice because they want to go on the stage.

If you have a hankering to be an actor, listen to his advice:

"You can count on this. Out of every thousand who try, 999 will be failures. Remember that if a part is going that doesn't call for a giant, a dwarf or a person with two heads, almost anyone can play it.

LUCK

"But if you feel you can face the heartbreak, and you have such a burning inner urge to act that you know you will be incomplete and really unhappy doing anything else, then go ahead—and good luck to you."

That element of luck, said Boris Karloff, is the important ingredient. His luck was "my dear old monster," who lifted him from being a small part player to a household name.

"I owe everything to him. He's my best friend."

Karloff on Sound

BORIS KARLOFF, who has been making television films for America in this country—presumably because it is cheaper here—



took part in a drama recording for B.B.C. sound radio during the summer. "The Hanging Judge," in which he plays the part made famous by the late Sir Godfrey Tearle, will be heard in the Light on Dec. 2.

(he'll like it).

7. *The Man Who Lived Again*: Very simply, Karloff's best mad doctor epic. What a novel idea for 1936!

8. *The Devil Commands*: Weird and eerie, this sleeper was deservedly honored by Bill Everson in his *Classics Of The Horror Film*. I really like this one!

9. *The Man They Could Not Hang*: Another great fun film, highlighted by Karloff's killer speech to the jury.

10. *Son Of Frankenstein*: Shoot me, but I can't help loving Boris, Bela (especially), Lionel & Basil together. Maybe a bit long, but didn't we all clamor for the complete version on channel 9 in NY all the time?

Where are they? *Bride Of Frankenstein* Sorry it didn't come to mind. *Black Room* and *The Body Snatcher*, both great on first viewings, but do they really bear that many repeat visits? *The Walking Dead*, too contrived & too slow for 65 minutes. Santie Claus as a mad doc?! *Invisible Ray* just misses. *Targets*, are you kidding? No apologies to the *Bride Of Frankenstein* cast toenail collectors club; remember, I hate steak, The Beatles, bleach blondes & Seinfeld.

By the way, Tom Weaver, "Poor" Bela appeared in 10 (plus!) films that are "this good:" *Dracula*, *Murders In The Rue Morgue*, *The Black Cat*, *The Raven*, *The Invisible Ray*, *Island Of Lost Souls*, *White Zombie*, *Ghost Of Frankenstein*, *Human Monster*, *Abbott & Costello Meet Frankenstein* +, +, + nuff said!

Boris Karloff Films—The Best Ten by Garydon Rhodes.

1. *Bride Of Frankenstein*
2. *Frankenstein*
3. *The Mummy*
4. *The Black Cat*
5. *The Body Snatcher*
6. *Son Of Frankenstein*
7. *Black Sabbath*
8. *Isle Of The Dead*
9. *Bedlam*
10. *The Old Dark House*

Edward and Carolyn Plumb's Top Ten Boris Karloff Films (in no particular order)

1. *Frankenstein*: No other film nor director can show the power of the roles created here by Karloff and Colin Clive.
2. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: Karloff brings incredible sympathy to the role of the monster. A true rarity in the fact that the sequel is better than the original.
3. *The Mummy*: Karloff truly stands out in this one because none of the other actors can touch the glow of his performance here.
4. *The Body Snatcher*: Karloff's most chilling performance on film.
5. *Son Of Frankenstein*: A good performance in the best Frankenstein film, with Lugosi, Rathbone and Atwill moving the excitement along.
6. *House Of Frankenstein*: The best mad scientist role that he pulled off after being typecast by all that dreck from Columbia.
7. *The Walking Dead*: Karloff's best performance as a monster away from Universal.
8. *The Black Cat*: A good evil performance opposite Lugosi in a good director's best film.
9. *Bedlam*: Karloff nicely shows a few different personalities in this film.
10. *The Old Dark House*: Great film with a fun cast. Karloff is actually overshadowed here.

SE THE EXCEPTION

★ **MR. BORIS KARLOFF** has been discussing the harmful effects, if any, of children's nursery stories.

★ "You know," he says, "there is much more horror and violence in nursery tales than on television or the screen. We have all been brought up on them—and none of us has turned out a monster. Except, of course, me."

The king

BORIS KARLOFF — who started it all—has proper tribute paid to him at last. His next picture is entitled *The King of the Monsters*.

ES

My Favorite Boris Karloff Performances By Lucy Chase Williams (in no particular order)

1. *The Black Cat*: Every budding teenage female pervert got off when Lugosi stripped Karloff barechested and flayed him alive. Remember how his fingers clenched and clawed in that leather wrist restraint? And that hot, haunting Tchikovski music score...

2. *The Mummy*: More bareskin and Boris Karloff romance! That girl was a wimp—after all he went through for her!

3. *Comedy Of Terrors*: I'm tired of the abuse I get for thinking this picture is hysterical. All the guys were fabulous together, and every line makes me laugh.

4. *The Black Room*: Another biggie when I was a kiddie. Of course, he was noticeably bandy-legged with his trousers tucked in his boots, but we loved that tousled long hair. And what about the way he peeled that pear...?

5. *Targets*: The ultimate. Who didn't want to be Peter Bogdanovich and direct Boris Karloff? Who didn't want to be Sammy Michaels and get drunk with Byron Orlok?

6. *The Man They Could Not Hang*: When I was eleven, I recorded this on my huge reel to reel, with the machine placed in front of the tv. You can hear me and my best friend, Hil, sniffing, and her whisper, "Don't di-i-i-ie!" My favorite line: "Hanging" — snap — "breaks the neck..."

7. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: Now here's a cinematic masterpiece. Each time I see it, I find something new to appreciate, or something old to appreciate in a new way. How lucky we are that that crew and that cast were brought together at the right time in the right place.

8. *Charlie Chan At The Opera*: Come to think of it, I haven't seen this picture in 25 years, so don't tell me it's actually awful.

9. *How The Grinch Stole Christmas*: Cindy Lou Who! Who was only two... And Max! That unique voice and delivery combined with Chuck Jones at his best—I know every frame, every word, every note of those wonderful Albert Hague songs.

10. *Girl From U.N.C.L.E.*— *The Mother Muffin Affair*: Last month, I saw this for the first time since broadcast in the sixties—it held up just fine. I still have the full page ad it merited in my local TV Guide.

I see now, from this list, that Karloff is very much an icon of my childhood, of my formative years. But he is not relegated to the past; I can only continue to admire and appreciate and enjoy. (And of course, there's *You'll Find Out*, *Frankenstein*, *Route 66*, *The Body Snatcher*, *Peter Pan* with Jean Arthur, *Red Skelton Show* with Vincent Price, and ...)

Spider Subke's Ten Favorite Boris Karloff Flicks

1. *The Body Snatcher*: Boris has a fantastic finale.
2. *The Black Cat*: Boris and Bela, a great team.
3. *The Invisible Ray*: SF, Boris and Bela, a great mix.
4. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: First rate weird Whale.
5. *Son Of Frankenstein*: Great look, lots of power.
6. *The Raven* (1935): Karloff had a blast here!
7. *Frankenstein*: Karloff creates a legend.
8. *The Mummy*: Karloff Incarnate!
9. *The Devil Commands*: And Karloff delivers.
10. *Bedlam*: Karloff chews scenes magnificently.

Boris is back—as a 'ghost'

"DAILY MIRROR" REPORTER 12 JUL 1952

BORIS KARLOFF, the Hollywood star who made horror his business, stepped out at Plymouth yesterday, and said: "Let's forget Frankenstein—this is just the weather for cricket."

Boris, still British after forty years in the United States, is back for his first visit in sixteen years. And as he stood on the quayside with his wife, Evelyn Hope, he said: "You might call it 'The Return of the Ghost.' But it's grand to be back and I'm looking forward to Lord's and Denis Compton."

A New Moustache

"I've given up playing now—I'm sixty-five, you know. Aubrey Smith and I introduced cricket to Hollywood. Now there are six teams there."

Pointing to a newly acquired grey, military moustache, he said: "This is for some TV pictures I hope to make for the American market while I'm in England. I expect to play the role of Colonel March, special investigator."

Sinister stuff?

"Oh, no. In fact, the role may be a little too benign."

During his four months' stay he intends to look up some relations—Sir John Pratt formerly of the Foreign Office, is one of his brothers.

Did Boris intend to apply for American citizenship?

No, sir. I owe my success and my money to America; but I would be a hypocrite if I became anything but British."



"Let's forget about Frankenstein."—Boris Karloff yesterday

Horror man is so soothing

HOLLYWOOD'S man of horror—with an English accent, English car and English wife—arrived in London last night for his first visit in 16 years. 12 JUL 1952

He confessed: "The thing I liked doing best in recent years was telling bedtime stories to children over the radio."

Boris Karloff, the monster of the films, is here for a holiday and to make three TV pictures — "And I am on the side of the law in them."

His real name is William Pratt. He is the youngest of a Dulwich, S.E., family. While here he hopes to see his four surviving brothers.

The eldest, Sir John Pratt, former Foreign Office official, telephoned Boris last night. "He still calls me Bill," said Boris, who is 64.

The Karloff opinion on his horror films? "An actor who gets typed is lucky. If you can get so typed and can keep going, you are all right."



Home for good, says Karloff

THE man who brought horror to the cinema screen in the thirties came home to Britain to-day—determined never to make any more horror films.

British-born Boris Karloff, who, in recent years, has been TV's Colonel March, is to live in England after 50 years in the United States, most of them in Hollywood.

"I'm home at last," said Karloff when he stepped with his wife from a Comet at London Airport.

Does he intend to take advantage of the current return to horrific films? . . . "Certainly not. I don't want anything more to do with all that stuff."

"And, anyway, I'm too busy with all my other commitments for TV."

The Karloffs are to live in a Cadogan-square flat.



Boris Karloff and his wife arrive at London Airport.

THE MAN BEHIND THE MONSTER

BORIS KARLOFF is growing handsome! Those hollow cheeks are filling out now, those eyes are not so deep-set, and that hair is silkier and whiter.

The older he gets, the more Boris Karloff looks like the thoroughbred Englishman he really is. Now 56, his stately good looks set feminine hearts fluttering.

Yet his name is still associated with horror. Twenty-five years ago, a bit-player, Karloff was cast as the monster in *Frankenstein*. He has never been able to live down that reputation.

Now he stars in the series *Colonel March of Scotland Yard*, every Saturday, as a quiet-spoken, suave detective. His only concession to the sinister is a black patch on one eye.

But still there are millions who give an involuntary shudder when they see the word "Karloff" on a playbill. It is all so untrue, this "terror" reputation: he is a kind man, passionately fond of children.

He was born William Henry Pratt, youngest of eight children. An old Dulwich College and Uppingham boy, he was

destined for the diplomatic service—but ran away to Canada to become an actor.

And after more than 40 years on the other side of the Atlantic, he remains a British citizen.

With his English wife, Evelyn Helmore, he is making regular visits to his home country. And he has hinted that he might—perhaps next year—settle here in England for good.

More than six feet tall, William Henry Pratt changed his name when he reached Canada as a young man. The "Boris" part belonged to his grandfather, and "Karloff" was from his mother's side of the family.

His first acting job was with a touring repertory company at 30 dollars a week. After his first performance his salary was cut to 15 dollars—no reason was given.

The next ten years were spent with repertory companies, never earning more than those 30 dollars. But then he ventured to Hollywood and became an "extra."

Soon—and he never expected to rise higher—he was a bit-player, but was "typed" as a French-Canadian trapper. Those parts were scarce.

So it was a lean time for Karloff. He drove lorries while waiting for parts, until



KARLOFF as he is—the cricket-loving English gentleman

he was spotted by the man who was casting the *Frankenstein* film.

He hasn't made a terror-film for years. Indeed, in 1950, his deep, musical voice was occupied with an American radio disc-jockey programme for children.

But his favourite occupation—the secret reason, I suspect, for his summer visits to this country—is cricket.

In Hollywood he played for Sir Aubrey Smith's eleven, and this year he was umpiring benefit matches in Surrey.

Edward Fox

Buddy Barnett's 10 Favorite Karloff Films

1. *The Body Snatcher*: A great movie, Karloff's best performance, and Bela Lugosi thrown in for good measure.

2. *Frankenstein*: Karloff's most famous creation. What else is there to say?

3. *The Raven* (1935): Lugosi's the star, but Karloff has some great dialogue and scenes in one of the best horror movies ever made.

4. *Son Of Frankenstein*: Karloff and Lugosi make a great team as the monster and Ygor in what is probably the best *Frankenstein* film of all time.

5. *The Mummy*: Great reincarnation film with Karloff in one of his most skillful performances.

6. *The Black Cat*: Karloff Vs. Lugosi in a classy film.

7. *The Invisible Ray*: Karloff Vs. Lugosi again, this time in an early science fiction classic.

8. *The Devil Commands*: The closest Karloff ever came to doing a Lugosi Monogram film. It is a total delight.

9. *Five Star Final*: A fantastic pre-code Warner Brothers melodrama starring Edward G. Robinson. Karloff is a hoot as a drunken, lecherous newspaperman.

10. *The Incredible Dr. Markeson* (Thriller tv episode): Karloff's scariest performance ever.

My Top Ten Favorite Boris Karloff Films By Robert J. Kokal

1. *Bride Of Frankenstein*: The best of the classic Universal horror films. This film is lush, stylish and lyrical. It has a fairy tale quality that is highlighted by a grand musical score by Franz Waxman. Everyone is at the peak of their craft with this movie. Karloff shines, and brings new depth and levels to the character that made him a star. First class!

2. *The Mummy*: Another classic spotlighting Karloff as Im-Ho-Tep and his contemporary resurrection of Ardash Bey. Ardash Bey appears brittle enough to crack. The story is told gorgeously by first time director Karl Freund. Ancient evenings come to life courtesy of the artistry of Karloff, Freund and Jack Pierce!

3. *The Black Cat*: One of Karloff's creepiest characterizations! Karloff is sly and cunning in every scene he appears in. His eyes always mirror the thoughts that are going through this evil character's mind. Unnerving!

4. *Frankenstein*: The benchmark that made Karloff's name a household word. Karloff presents a well thought out characterization of the Monster in its infancy. Along with its predecessor *Dracula*, this is the film that began setting the standards for the genre. A landmark!

5. *Son Of Frankenstein*: Though Lugosi's Ygor shamelessly steals the film from his costars, it is the third and last time that Karloff appeared as the Monster. When the script allows the mostly catatonic monster to interact he has some nice moments.

6. *Charlie Chan At The Opera*: As Gravelle, the lunatic opera star, Karloff is the ultimate red herring. About the only person who doesn't suspect Karloff upon first viewing of this film is most humble detective from Honolulu police department. Charlie Chan and Boris too! What fun! Have been expecting same!

7. *The Body Snatcher*: An RKO classic! Victorian mood and atmosphere support Boris in one of his most vile and evil characterizations. A nice period piece!

8. *House Of Frankenstein*: This may not be one of the classic Universal titles, but this one is a lot of fun! You get the *Frankenstein* Monster, Count Dracula, The Wolfman and Boris on the other side



KARLOFF as the "monster"

of the lab table trying to resurrect the very monster that he created in 1931! The only thing missing is Bela!

9. *Black Sabbath*: My only non 30s and 40s pick. Boris narrates this trilogy of horror a la *Thriller* and also portrays the chilling vampire patriarch in *The Wurdalak* section of the film. Watch it late at night with lights off!

10. *The Devil Commands*: A great Columbia Boris title! One of the best of Karloff's "man delving into things man was not meant to know" movies. Boris' mind degenerates throughout the movie as he pines away for his dead wife and attempts to make contact with her across dimensions. Early science fiction's answer to *Wuthering Heights*!

My Ten Favorite Boris Karloff Films By Lee Harris

1. *The Black Cat*: A real anomaly of the studio system, even Universal. Unremitting heaviness... "Did you hear that, Vitus? Even the phone is dead."

2. *Frankenstein*: I know the popular fave is *Bride Of Frankenstein*, but it's full of comic relief. Horror films are supposed to scare you, and Boris backing through the doorway and turning around is unforgettable.

3. *Targets*: Karloff's *Whales Of August*. We see him on the hippie era Sunset Strip, decrying the crappy state of modern horror films!

4. *House Of Rothschild*: Saw this on TV at age 12, when I was probably too young to appreciate the brilliant Brit ensemble acting combo of Karloff and George Arliss.

5. *Black Sabbath*: Karloff as a malevolent grandpa, absconding with the little kid, is unnerving.

6. *The Mask Of Fu Manchu*: Boris chews the scenery (deliciously) as cliched "Insidious Oriental." Saw it in 35mm nitrate, and the torture spikes gleamed.

7. *The Nickel Hopper*: Karloff's funny as the bruiser trying to pick up Mabel Normand, with subtitle reading "A man who has a Rolls Royce attracts more girls than one who doesn't."

8. *The Man With Nine Lives*: Favorite of Columbia's Boris Karloff programmers.

9. *Frankenstein 1970*: Yes, dammit! Grew to love this corny, self conscious film thru repeated TV viewings.

10. *The Mummy*: Snail's pace, background music, dusty feeling of ancient Egypt make it unique. Karloff shows his support of engineer's union by showing his ring and chanting "Nabet, Nabet, Nabet..."

Frank Dello Stritto lists his 10 Favorites of Boris

1. *Body Snatcher*
2. *The Bride Of Frankenstein*
3. *Targets*
4. *Man With 9 Lives*
5. *Black Cat*
6. *Son Of Frankenstein*
7. *Black Room*
8. *Black Friday*
9. *Frankenstein*
10. *The Mummy*
11. (And as a runner-up, since it's really Bela's film) *The Raven*.

The Borls Top 10 By Lisa Mitchell

1. *The Black Cat*
2. *The Mummy*
3. *The Raven* (1935)
4. *Unconquered*
5. *The Secret Life Of Walter Mitty*
6. *Scarface*
7. *Bedlam*
8. *Invisible Ray*
9. *Frankenstein*
10. *Black Friday* and *The Body Snatcher* (tie)

Cult Movies thanks the following Karloff contributors:

Forry Ackerman: Still at the helm of the original monster mag, *Famous Monsters* after nearly 40 years.

Ron Borst: His book *Graven Images* is a must for every horror fan.

Michael Brunas: Co-author of the book *Universal Horrors*

Glenn L. Damato: A big film collector and horror fan of the 30s and 40s.

Frank J. Dello Stritto: Author of the great continuing series on Lugosi in *Cult Movies* and a film critic for over 20 years.

Lee Harris: *Cult Movies'* graves of the stars expert.

Jan Alan Henderson: Frequent contributor to *Cult Movies*, *Filmfax* and *American Cinematographer*.

Robert J. Kokai: Author of the upcoming family authorized Lon Chaney biography.

Greg Mank: His latest book is *Hollywood Cauldron*. He also authored the classic book *Karloff and Lugosi*

Lisa Mitchell: Author of the Karloff *Mummy* tribute in this issue.

John Norris: A classic horror fan who has contributed stills from his vast archive to *Cult Movies* from the beginning.

Joe O'Brien: Karloff fan and another contributor to *Cult Movies*.

Edward and Carolyn Plumb: A couple of classic horror enthusiasts and frequent contributors to *Cult Movies*.

Garydon Rhodes: Garydon was the former president of the Bela Lugosi fan club, he likes Karloff too, and is author of an upcoming book on Bela Lugosi.

Ken Schacter: Ken is a big Karloff fan and collector and interviewed Sara Karloff for us in this issue.

Spider Subke: Spider has been with *Cult Movies* since the beginning.

Mario Toland: Big Karloff and Lugosi fan and contributor to *Cult Movies*.

Morris Vescovi: Another major Karloff collector and *Cult Movies* contributor.

Tom Weaver: Author of *Poverty Row Horrors*. His current book is *Attack of the Monster Movie Makers* from McFarland.

Lucy Chase Williams: Author of *The Films of Vincent Price*, a comprehensive compendium to be published by Citadel Press in 1995.



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BELA LUGOSI MEETS A BROOKLYN GORILLA

The plot of this age-peeling filthies horror-spoof centres on a tropical island scientist, who turns one-half of a stranded comedy team into a gorilla. "Brooklyn Gorilla" co-stars an unlucky pair of Martin & Lewis lookalikes. In fact, the real drawing power of this film is Sammy Petrosi's Jerry Lewis impersonation. Bela turns in his usual "good" performance as the tropical turkey.

Black & White

AF126



THE VIOLENT YEARS

While we can only say for sure the Ed Wood wrote *The Violent Years* (the directorial credit going to William Morgan), the finished product form the opening sequence — a parade of bad girls signing in on a blackboard — to its maudlin conclusion — *The Violent Years* certainly bears the mark of the master. Despite the mediocre acting, static photography and knuckle-headed editing, it is Ed Wood's dialogue that stands head and shoulders beneath them all. *The Violent Years* is the story of a poor little rich girl and her all-girl gang, who prey on lone service station attendants and coupled parked in lovers' lanes. If watching what happens to them doesn't turn you in to a J.D. chances are nothing will.

Black & White

AF 131



PEEPING TOM

Made in 1960 by Michael Powell, *"Peeping Tom"* was a scandal. Previously hailed as a great English filmmaker, Powell was immediately an outcast upon the release of the film. This study of a voyeuristic maniac who kills women while filming them on his 16mm camera created such a furor that Powell became an unbankable director. Curiously enough, Hitchcock's *"Psycho"* was released the same year but Powell's was made in England and their reaction to horror films of any kind was usually negative.

There are no scenes of nudity or gratuitous violence, yet the psychological seaziness and emotional torment create an incredibly dark atmosphere that only prevails in the most classic horror films.

This is the uncult, previously unseen version and is not recommended for children.

Colour

DETOUR

Perhaps the most inexpensive but significant contribution to the Film Noir genre, Edgar C. Ulmer's *"Detour"* is one of those films that you see once and never forget.

Made in 1945 by the most anemic poverty-row studio, P.R.C., the film is the story of a New York night-club pianist (Tom Neal) whose singer-girlfriend gets a chance for the big time and hops off to L.A. Neal hangs in the big apple for awhile, but impulsively decides to meet her and hitches a ride to the coast. Along the way, he encounters his "detour" — the cruel hand of fate. His life is forever changed, maimed and stifled.

Black & White

65 minutes



SPIDER BABY

Here is an oddity of enormous proportions.

Spider Baby was made in 1964 and was truly a work of grade Z horror.

It has since risen to classic cult status. The film stars Lon Chaney Jr. (He must've been pushing 60) as a senior member of a clan who chow down on other folks.

Chaney also sings the title song! Intimate black character actor Mantan Moreland (best known for his appearances in Charlie Chan movies) shows up as well as lesser known Sig Haig and Carol Ohmart.

This monstrosity comes to you in glorious black and white and will surely get your appetite whetted as well as your turkey quota filled.

Black & White

86 minutes



JAILBAIT

There is no obvious reason (outside of pressure from the distributor) why Ed (Plan 9 From Outer Space) Wood called his third feature film *"Jail Bait"*. It is by no means an exploitation film with under-age, over-sexed girls causing trouble in Anytown, U.S.A. Instead, it is an ultra-cheap, unintentionally hilarious foray into the film noir genre, done in true Woodman style.

Made in 1954 for the Howco Film Company, Wood directed and co-wrote a slimy, smelly melodrama of small time crooks in constant run-ins with the law. Shot in four days in a dirty little place called Monterey Park, *"Jail Bait"* has such an incredible taint, you almost feel the need to take a shower after seeing it.

Black & White



SHE DEMONS

In the grand old tradition of poverty row dementia, we are pleased as punch to bring you a real whopper of a film. *"She Demons"* (1958) stars former *"Sheena of the Jungle"* Irish McCalla, as the heroine in this sub-zero budget cheapie which revolves around a mad Nazi war criminal with a yen for turning good looking girls into female Frankenstein's. It is no coincidence that the same culprit, Dick Cunha was responsible for the classic *"Frankenstein's Daughter"* done in the same year in the same - ahem! - fashion. Some good comic relief from ex-number one son (from Monogram) Charlie Chan (Hicks), Victor Sen Young and some dicey special effects and set backgrounds make this an unbeatable companion for your Ed Wood (Plan 9) and Phil Tucker (Robert Monster) film collection.

Black & White

90 minutes



PLAN 9 FROM OUTER SPACE

Take Bela Lugosi's last two minutes of film footage before he died, scratchy World War Two news reels, wobbly hub-cap space ships, Criswell (a TV prophet), a 400lb. Swedish wrestler and a beakish ghoul-girl; mix financial backing from a Baptist Church and film making that breaks all the convention rules with great abandon — and you have the winner of the "Golden Turkey Awards" highest honour — worst film of all time.

The plot of *"Plan 9"* concerns space people raising the dead, and turning them loose against fellow earthlings who, in the alien's minds, are out to destroy the universe with nuclear testing. Some Plot! Some movie!

With coming attractions from the fifties.

Black & White

86 minutes



BRIDE OF THE MONSTER

The creator of Plan 9 From Outer Space and Glen or Glenda brings new meaning to the word "horror". Edward D. Wood Jr. again leaves a trail of stiff acting, awful dialogue and incredibly lame special effects in his "creative" wake. Watch as Lugosi force-feeds himself to a rubber stage-prop "octopus monster" in a scene that will leave you laughing endlessly.

High camp coming attractions from the fifties add further enjoyment to this, the third in our Ed Wood retrospective.

Black & White

78 minutes



THREE STOOGES FESTIVAL

Welcome to *"The Three Stooges Festival"* a joyful package of five of the Stooges best two reels. You'll thrill to the action in *"Disorder in the Court"* (1936) as Curly cuts loose in a murder trial; you'll swoon as Shemp dies and comes back as an angel out to reform Moe and Larry in *"Heavenly Daze"* (1948). You'll choke as the Stooges don Santa Clause disguises in *"Malice in the Palace"* (1949). You'll...oh! you get the message, there is an endless supply of belly laughs and hysterics as the kings of wild comedy come to you in this ADMIT ONE collector's special.

Who woo woo woo, what are you waiting for? Spread out and pick two fingers, porcupine.

Black & White



THE TERROR OF TINY TOWN

You've heard about it — now see it! Sounds like a carnival pitch? How fitting, as *Admit One* brings you the most bizarre western ever made; the one with the all-midget cast. Filmed in 1938, *"Terror of Tiny Town"* had been included in everyone's worst film list, but as in the case of films like *Reefer Madness* and *Plan 9 From Outer Space*, *"The Terror of Tiny Town"* is unintentional hilarity.

To round out this round-up, *Admit One* had added some great vintage coming attractions from the thirties.

"HI-YO LITTLE SILVER, AWAY..."

Black & White



THE BRUTE MAN

Rondo Hatton, a real life monster who did not need make-up, stars in the 1946 film about a youth horribly disfigured by a prank caused by his school chums. He sets out on a trail of revenge years later, raising this low budget suspense film to higher ground just on the strength of his riveting screen presence. A fine balance of reality and fantasy leaving the viewer with no choice but to be totally absorbed and entertained.

Black & White

62 minutes

COMING NEXT WEEK...

Those Great Movie Trailers *Admit One* is delighted to give movie fans of all ages a chance to see two hours of assorted movie previews from the 30's to the 80's. Truly a high speed history of Hollywood film, including Horror, Sci-Fi, Drama, Comedy, Musicals, Exploitation, Westerns, Serials and many others in between, they're all here in one package that will keep you enthralled and totally entertained.

Colour & Black & White

120 minutes



GLEN OR GLENDA

Before *"Plan From Outer Space"*, there was *"Glen or Glenda"*, also known as *"I Led Two Lives"*. This is a Truth or Consequences study of shock director Edward D. Wood Jr.'s desire to publicly air his personal demons — sex change and transsexuality. Packed with stiff acting, non-sensical dialogue, meaningful lightening, and Bela Lugosi rambling on about doom in a truly mad, doctor's lair, Wood manages in this first film to give us another true camp classic.

For added enjoyment, more great coming attractions from the fifties.

Black & White

65 minutes



LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

Admit One would like to welcome you to the *Little Shop of Horrors*. Produced and directed by Roger Corman in 1960. Filming took two days and the result is considered a classic and one of the most effective and cost effective pieces of filmmaking accomplished. The plot concerns itself with Seymour Krelbein, a clerk in a florists' shop who becomes the unwitting slave of an obnoxious, blood-sucking plant that keeps screaming *"Feed Me"*, sending a hypnotized Seymour out in search of new victims. *Admit One* is absolutely blooming to be able to present this low-budget gem for your enjoyment. Be sure to give it plenty of sun!!!

Black & White

AF 129



REEFER MADNESS



Meant to help high school kids and parents kick the marijuana habit — real threat or imagined — this 1939 low-budget anti-drug propaganda film has inadvertently become a cult classic in colleges and revival houses across North America. Using the fact that pulling turns you into a homicidal, sex-crazed maniac unable to control yourself in even the simplest normal social functions the cast excels itself admirably — creating new highs in high camp.

Black & White

(EVERYBODY EXHALE)

63 minutes

SUPERMAN — THE CARTOONS



Eight of the 1940 colour Superman cartoons produced by the Fleischer Studios — the same men behind *Betty Boop* and *Popeye*. These cartoons transferred the comic book hero to the screen in beautiful, full colour, rotoscoped animation shorts, creating another chapter in the superhero's legacy. Also included is a black and white live-action theatrical short from 1953 called *"Stamp Day for Superman"* starring TV actor, George Reeves.

Colour/Black & White

89 minutes

FIVE MINUTES TO LIVE

Johnny Cash (yes the country singer) stars as a psycho kidnapper who holds a housewife (Cay Foster, who also wrote the film) hostage to extract a ransom from her wealthy husband. Also stars Ronny Howard (Opie on *"The Andy Griffith Show"*) and Vic Tayback (Mel from the TV Show *"Alice"*).



ALSO AVAILABLE FROM ADMIT ONE

Dick Tracy/Diema/Scared to Death (Double Feature)
Dick Tracy vs Cusack/Bowery at Midnight (Double Feature)
Dick Tracy Detective/The Corpse Vanishes (Double Feature)
Dick Tracy Meets Gruesome/Groovy Run Wild (Double Feature)
Mardianna - The Devil's Kiss
Sherlock Holmes and the Gypsy Woman/The Woman in Green (Double Feature)
Sherlock Holmes - Terror by Night/Dressed to Kill (Double Feature)
Chained for Life

Carnival Rock
The Brat from Planet Arooo
Those Wild Boogers
International Crime
The Sin of Hamlet/Diabolical
Go Jimmy Go
East Side Kicks/The Lost City (Double Feature)
Frankenstein's Daughter
Mr. Moto's Last Warning/Meeting at Midnight (Double Feature)
Children The Three Headed Monster

Lost Planet Arooo
Nights of the Living Dead
White Zombie
The Menace
Susan's Satellites
Monster from Green Hell
TV Kantis (Vol 1)
The Robot vs The Atomic Mummy
Savage Crime Wave
Hillbills in a Haunted House

It's Ten Minutes 'Til Show Time...

by Terrance Jennings Wharton

There was a time when an evening spent at the drive-in theatre *always* guaranteed the viewing of at least one entertaining film: the "Come Visit Our Modern Concession Stand" production that accompanied the intermission (an especially welcome occurrence when flanked by two comparatively insignificant main-stream features). Some years ago, a drive-in owner was recalling (for my benefit) the highest grossing pictures at his three theaters (*The Ten Commandments* and *The Godfather* were the top two). When I asked if that included the snack-bar countdown, his face broke into a broad smile: "Over the years that I'd have to rank up there with any of them! I've never thought about it like that...all those kids! That's also how we were able to get away with admitting the whole carload on a single admission."

In 1952, Armour & Co. introduced the first ever live-action concession stand trailer. While animated films of the "Come On Out To The Lobby" ilk had been around for years, audiences had yet to be confronted with "actual" images of patrons enjoying snack-bar treats. Presented free of charge to almost 600 drive-ins, this one minute short (featuring a jingle sung by Bing Crosby's "Starlighters") heralded that it was time for intermission, along with a refreshing drink, box of popcorn and a delicious Armour frank: "If Drinks Are What You Want - We Got 'Em - Hot or Cold, Just Toller, All Drinks Taste Good With Armour Franks, You Bet Your Bottom Dollar. If Your Taste For Popcorn's Set, We Have It Hot And Waiting, For A Extra Treat Just Buy A Bag, It's Fun To Eat When Dating." From drive-ins everywhere, reports of increased concession sales began piling up at Armour's Chicago headquarters. A Missouri ozoner experienced a 25% increase in hot dog sales the very first night the trailer was shown and total snack-bar sales for the season finished 30% higher than for the previous year. When the film debuted at the Big Sandy Drive-In in Portland, OR, four times the normal amount of hot dogs were sold and an Armour representative attending the theatre with his family, hurriedly placed an emergency order for an additional 72 lb. of the franks.

Several hundred similar responses prompted Armour to release eight new trailers for the 1953 season. Close examination of actual 35mm footage of one such vintage example (from the author's collection), through an 8x Agfa lupe, reveals that the wholesome young couple at the snack-bar counter, were standing next to a one-sheet for the "birth-of-a-baby" classic *Street Corner* (a detail almost entirely cropped out when the film is projected, or viewed on tape). While the suggestive potential of the screen-size hot dog was yet to be fully realized (e.g., the animated circus trailer, produced by Filmack Studios, where the bun coaxes the hot dog to do flips and then slide-in), Armour had struck a responsive chord and served to open the floodgates for live-action food clips of varying depth and quality: from limpid, lackluster stills of inedible, would-be food, on up to more elaborate (even moderately over-blown, considering their narrow scope) product layouts, with stop-motion effects, and post production optical printing—creating overlapping and kaleidoscopic images resembling distasteful Busby Berkley scenarios (National Screen Service turned out mul-



ATTENTION INDOOR & DRIVE-IN THEATRES

Grab Some Easy Money BY SELLING YOUR OWN MERCHANTS SCREEN ADS

WRITE FOR FREE CATALOG . . . AND INFORMATION REGARDING KIT FULL OF SALES AIDS

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WABASH ILLINOIS

FOR FAST SERVICE - PLUS QUALITY . . . ALWAYS GET
YOUR SPECIAL TRAILERS FROM DEPENDABLE FILMACK

tipple examples of the latter variety).

Most (but not all) intermission reels were constructed around a "clock-shell." Comprised of a 20 to 30 second introduction or "header," 8 second clips counting off each minute, and a 10 second closing, or "tag," this framework only accounted for about 2 minutes of screen time. The remaining 5 to 7 minutes (a typical "10 Minute" show usually ran at 7-9 minutes, a subtle example of temporal compression) were nothing less than a blank canvas to the local drive-in projectionist, that true master of cinema-montage, whose sledge hammer method of jump-cutting and juxtaposing footage (from a myriad of sources) sometimes produced ragged, even jarring results, worthy of repeated viewing (as in each and every visit to the theatre).

Indeed, in an era prior to mass MTV retina-overload there were no other cinematic shorts for widespread public viewing that were as crazy-mixed-up as the local concession stand assemblage: a presentation enriched by virtue of mismatched film stock; startling shifts in subject matter; secondary cement and tape splices; scratches;

scars; stretched stock; torn sprocket holes; and the signature carbon-arc fading (all sustained over the course of countless screenings). The following is only a partial inventory of the drive-in projectionist's considerable bag of tricks: live-action food clips, with helping-human-hands performing various tasks; animated martians, goofy professors, leprechauns, and uniformed guards (from National Screen Service); barbecue ads from Temp-Taste, Castleberry's and Genuine Smithfield; Pic mosquito coil and Drizzle Gard rain visor commercials; local merchant spots; Armed Forces Recruiting pitches; carefree animated interludes, with appropriately mindless musical scores; dim-bulb public service messages; live vistas of vast fields of grain, with fare machinery harvesting and patriotic strains swelling from the speakers; and the "Please Return The Speaker Before You Leave The Theatre" ("AND DON'T EVER LET US CATCH YOU STEALING ONE") announcement.

Viewing the short films of Bruce Conner (*A Movie, Cosmic Ray, America Is Waiting*), several years back, brought back fond memories of the

A Pleasant Surprise
awaits you when
you play

WAHOO

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WAHOO is the
ideal boxoffice attraction
to increase business on your
"off-nights". Write today for complete details. Be sure to give seating or car capacity.

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mishmash world of the snack-bar film, where context could create unlikely pairings and newfound meaning. A memorable countdown from the Sky View Cruise-In, in Lancaster, OH, (that played intact through the 1989 season) included a cut-away from the "Ten Little Indians" clock-shell (produced by the Alexander Film Co.) to a title card proclaiming "This Is Your Land, AMERICA! Demonstrate Your Faith In It In Your EVERY ACTION," then cut back to the cartoon Indians (not only a subconscious subversion of content, but additionally, a classic example of "one minute" in "intermission time" lasting barely 20 seconds).

Eventually taken for granted by most patrons (existing as little more than ambient, cinematic wallpaper), these odd mini-wonders provided for the more discriminating moviegoer, that perfectly twisted transition between screenings of such fare as *The Undertaker And His Pals* and *The Corpse Grinders*. At a 10th anniversary engagement of *The Texas Chainsaw Massacre* (at the E. Main Drive-In, in Columbus, OH), a smattering of cheers and groans alike could be heard from several cars when the local Temp-Taste barbecue ad (from the Ohio Steak & Barbecue Co., that's general manager Dan Enderle with the case of meat) hit the intermission screen. Every six months, dark-dwelling types gathered for the Drexel North's 24 hr. sci-fi and horror marathons (Columbus, OH), react in much the same way when the live-action hand ladles the Castleberry's barbecue onto a bun, firmly mashes the top down and the narrator intones "Mmmm." Long live the drive-in snack-bar picture show...

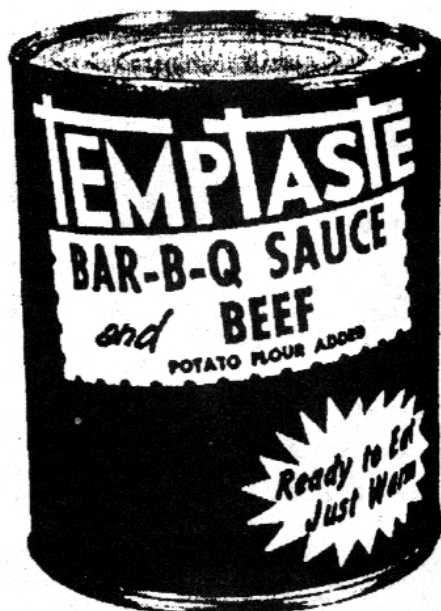
(The author extends heartfelt thanks to Joe Mack, Robert Mack, Garrett Tuck, Brian Kniceley, George Maranville, Mike Vraney, Gene Westbrook - who presented me with my first coil of snack-bar footage in 1984 - and all of the drive-in owners, managers and projectionists.)

TALK IS CHEAP! **Voice-Over,**
Color Screen Ads
At The Lowest Prices Anywhere!

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125 Hyde St., San Francisco, Ca 94102
(415) 673-9162 • Gerald Karski, Pres

Distributors Of Trailers:
The following is a partial listing of film service companies who distributed and/or produced motion picture trailers of one manner or another.

Alexander Film Co., San Francisco, CA
Alpha Film Labs, Baltimore, MD
Ambuter Motion Picture Co., Boston, MA
Clyde Anderson Film Co., Salt Lake City, UT
Argo Film Prod., St. Louis, MO
Associated Film Exchange, Salt Lake City, UT
A.H. Babler Sr., St. Louis, MO
Barnett Film Serv., New Orleans, LA
Cine-Graphic Film Labs Inc., St. Louis, MO
Cinema Concepts Theatre Serv. Inc., Atlanta, GA
Clark Service Inc., Buffalo, NY
Colorama Prod., Baltimore, MD
Condor Films Inc., St. Louis, MO
Lillie M. Davis, New Orleans, LA
Escar Motion Picture Co., Cleveland, OH
Filmack Trailer Co., Chicago, IL
Film Arts Group, Milwaukee, WI
Folkemer Photo Serv., Baltimore, MD
Ger-Bar Inc., Indianapolis, IN
Edward H. Goldberger, St. Louis, MO



Max Gould Studio, St. Louis, MO
Guerin Enterprises Inc., St. Louis, MO
H&H Color Lab, Tampa, FL
Hallmark Films, Baltimore, MD
Hollywood Amusement Co., Skokie, IL
John L. Hermann & Associates Inc., New Orleans, LA
Ideal Pictures, Baltimore, MD
Industrial Film Lab, St. Louis, MO
Jamieson Film Co., Dallas, TX
Kleiman Prod., St. Louis, MO
Kunz Motion Pictures Inc., Philadelphia, PA
Lewy Studios, Baltimore, MD
Lippincott Pictures Inc., Philadelphia, PA
Master Motion Picture Co., Boston, MA
Moondial Manufacturing Corp., Los Angeles, CA
Monarch Theatre Supply, Memphis, TN
Monumental Films Inc., Baltimore, MD
Motion Picture Advertising Serv. Co., New York, NY
Motion Picture Serv. Co., San Francisco, CA
National Film Serv., New Orleans, LA
National Screen Serv., New York, NY
National Theatre Supply Co., Indianapolis, IN

READY NOW!

CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS SEASONAL GREETING TRAILER
A beautiful full-color 30-second or 60-second action scenic trailer with sleigh ride music background.

- Says "Happy Holidays"
- Lets your patrons know you care!
- Wish them a "Joyous Holiday Season"

30-Second \$9.50 postpaid
60-Second \$16.50 postpaid
Eastman Color Sound
Please specify 16mm or 35mm
Your money returned if not delighted!
SEND CHECK AND ORDER TO:

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Ask about our full-color custom time clock films and stock intermission-snack bar films.

Nationwide Pictures, Dallas, TX
Oran Prod., St. Louis, MO
Pacific Title & Art Studios, Los Angeles, CA
Parrot Film Serv., De Moines, IA
Pictosound Prod., St. Louis, MO
Premier Film & Recording Corp., St. Louis, MO
Quality Film Labs, Baltimore, MD
M.B. Russell, Salt Lake City, UT
Stansbury Photo Films, Baltimore, MD
Stark Films, Baltimore, MD
Strickland Film Co., Atlanta, GA
Shelby Stork & Co., St. Louis, MO
Simon Film Serv., Detroit, MI
Sly Fox Films, Minneapolis, MN
Standard Screen Serv., Los Angeles, CA
States Film Serv., Indianapolis, IN
Tri-State Theatre Serv., Memphis, TN
Technisonic Studios Inc., St. Louis, MO
Universal Images Ltd., Kansas City, MO
UTA Inc., Los Angeles, CA
Welgot Trailer Serv., New York, NY
Wilding Picture Prod., St. Louis, MO ■

ADD-A-CLIPS in full color



Anatomy Of A Short Film:

by Terrance Jennings Wharton

Drive-In Theatre Operators.

Are Mosquitos and Gnats keeping customers away?



PiC Coils give you the highest profit per sale in a mosquito repellent—averaging **\$194 a week in added profits*.**

PIC revolutionary in-car coil mosquito repellents provide guaranteed protection to your patrons (up to 7 hours each) and extra, profitable sales for you at your concession stand.

*Drive-In Theatres averaging sales of 1400 units weekly or approximately 200 cars a day. 200 sales • 35¢ equals \$70.00 times 7 days equals \$490.00. Your cost: \$296.00 Your profit: \$194.00.

PIC Corp. provides you with these sales aids... FREE!



Eye-Catching Counter Display with orders for PIC Coil packs sold at 36¢ or 99¢.



35mm Sound Film Trailer



FOR INQUIRIES OR ORDERS, CALL COLLECT: 201-862-1880
Warehouses located throughout the United States and Canada.
PIC Corporation, 1100 Sylvan St., Linden, N.J. 07036

While the Castleberry's Food Co. seemingly pioneered the concept of canned barbecue product for drive-in theatre consumption and provided more examples of entertaining intermission commercials than the competition, the Smithfield Ham & Products Co. will forever be associated with what was undoubtedly the most captivating celluloid calling card of them all. A drive-in owner from Oregon recently explained to me his "red shred" setup: "We still sell a barbecue beef sandwich, Smithfield of Virginia, and run the mid 1960s trailer to promote it. Actually I have two and they're almost identical. The "newer" one doesn't have the "Yahoo" geek at the end, nor the boy eating the sandwich, it has the sandwich disappear via jerky stop-frame magic. We shouldn't sell the stuff due to the enormous shipping costs from UPS, but we still do. It will keep indefinitely, so the leftover cans will be ready for next season..." The Vol. VII, No. 52 issue of *We Are The Weird* included and "R.I.P. Notice" for the Killarney Drive-In, of Arcadia, MO "...where every night began with the commercial for Smithfield barbecue: the man on the screen would yell 'Yahoo!' and everybody would lean out their car windows and yell 'Yahoo!' right back." I used to marvel at the mangled print that ran at the North High D.I., in Columbus, OH—minus half the words to the jingle. Now I know one of the projectionists who worked there and he figures he had to splice it "50 times!"

Combining animation with live-action footage, the Smithfield trailer consists of a total of 16 shots with a running time of 50 seconds. The following breakdown both outlines and pays tribute to this ambitious little short that's secured its own niche in drive-in history. (Any records that Smithfield may have had regarding the production of this trailer were lost to a fire.)

1) Opening shot of minimalist map of Virginia; picture zooms in on town of Smithfield, VA (pop. approx. 4,000); banjo plucked jingle with lyrics sung by female vocalist plays from outset. (4.50 sec.)

2) Frame 108: Cut to crudely animated figures of Capt. John Smith and Pocahontas standing under tree;

Pocahontas lures nearby gullible hog with giant peanut; Capt. Smith levels musket and blasts hog, filling air with thick smoke (5.00 sec.)

3) Frame 228: Dissolve to smoke wafting up from iron kettle tended to by Pocahontas, ladle and shaker in hand; Capt. Smith looks on, tongue sliding to and fro in expectation. (4.00 sec.)

4) Frame 324: Wipe to Pocahontas ladling BBQ onto bun; Capt. Smith looks on, bib in place; picture zooms in on BBQ sandwich and is thrown out of focus. (5.50 sec.)

5) Frame 456: Cut to close-up of out of focus, live-action shot of BBQ sandwich on plate, flanked by dill chips; picture is pulled into focus; male narrator goes into sales pitch as banjo continues to play for the duration. (2.25 sec.)

6) Frame 510: Cut to live-action medium shot of uniformed snack-bar attendant at freestanding BBQ counter, in front of curtain; man and boy walk up. (1.75 sec.)

7) Frame 552: Cut to medium close-up of attendant holding BBQ sandwich almost directly under boy's nose. (1.00 sec.)

8) Frame 576: Cut to previous medium shot; attendant sets down BBQ sandwich for boy; man orders another; boy proceeds to eat. (2.00 sec.)

9) Frame 624: Cut to close-up of boy eating BBQ sandwich; (who resembles Tim Ormond in this lone shot). (1.50 sec.)

10) Frame 660: Cut to medium close-up of BBQ in warmer, with actual Genuine Smithfield can placed next to it; attendant (framed from the elbows down) dutifully stirs the contents. (2.50 sec.)

11) Frame 720: Cut to close-up of boy contentedly munching his BBQ sandwich. (3.00 sec.)

12) Frame 792: Cut to close-up of attendant (from the hands down) placing bun on BBQ sandwich (setting it with toothpick), on a plate flanked by dill chips; man's hand pulls plate in his direction (actual Genuine Smithfield can partially visible). (3.75 sec.)

13) Frame 882: Cut to close-up of man enjoying that first bite of BBQ; vocalist picks up as narrator concludes.

(1.75 sec.)

14) Frame 924: Cut to medium close-up of attendant (from the elbows down) heaping more BBQ onto another bun, spilling it over onto plate (with actual Genuine Smithfield can at side). (3.75 sec.)

15) Frame 1014: Cut to close-up of man turning his head from side-to-side as he chews the savory BBQ. (1.00 sec.)

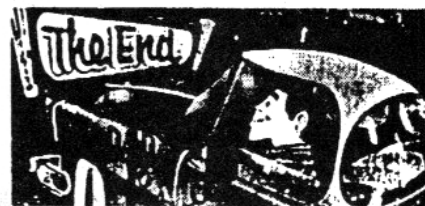
16) Frame 1038: Cut to extreme close-up of man masticating, rolling eyes skyward and unleashing an unabashed "YAAHHOOO!" then holding his eye-bulging, purse-lipped pose—looking positively demented... (6.50 sec.)

A Final Note:

One of the early Armour hot dog commercials (a print from the Atomic Drive-In, of Waverly, OH) is included on *Hey Folks, It's Intermission Time*, Vol. 1, available from Something Weird Video, P.O. Box 33664, Seattle, WA 98133, for \$23.00 ppd.. This tape also contains four complete 10 minute count-downs (one of which is still carried around to select drive-ins in Ohio and West Virginia, along with the 24 hr. sci-fi and horror marathons at the Drexel North in Columbus, OH).

The Genuine Smithfield BBQ commercial with Captain John Smith and Pocahontas; a couple of "over-the-top" productions from National Screen Service; and a clip showing Universal Images president Garrett Tuck, sitting in a convertible and eating a hot dog, are available on *Snacks 'N Snipes! Classic Drive-In Trailers*, from Medulla Oblongata Productions, P.O. Box 1337, Lexington, KY 40590. M.O.P. also produced a documentary for PBS, *Dusk 'Til Dawn: Kentucky's Rural Drive-In Theatres* and both it and *Snacks 'N Snipes* are on one tape for \$23.00 ppd..

The *Drive-In Theatre Newsletter*, edited by Nathan Miner, 225 W. First St., Frostburg, MD 21532 offers a great 60 minute audio cassette: *It's Intermission Time Folks!*, that comes in handy when frequenting drive-ins that no longer run a snack-bar film. Once you've equipped your ride with a pair of in-car speakers, you can not only recapture that true intermission ambience, but also circumvent that annoying FM sound that more and more ozoners are switching over to. The cassette is \$7.00 ppd. ■



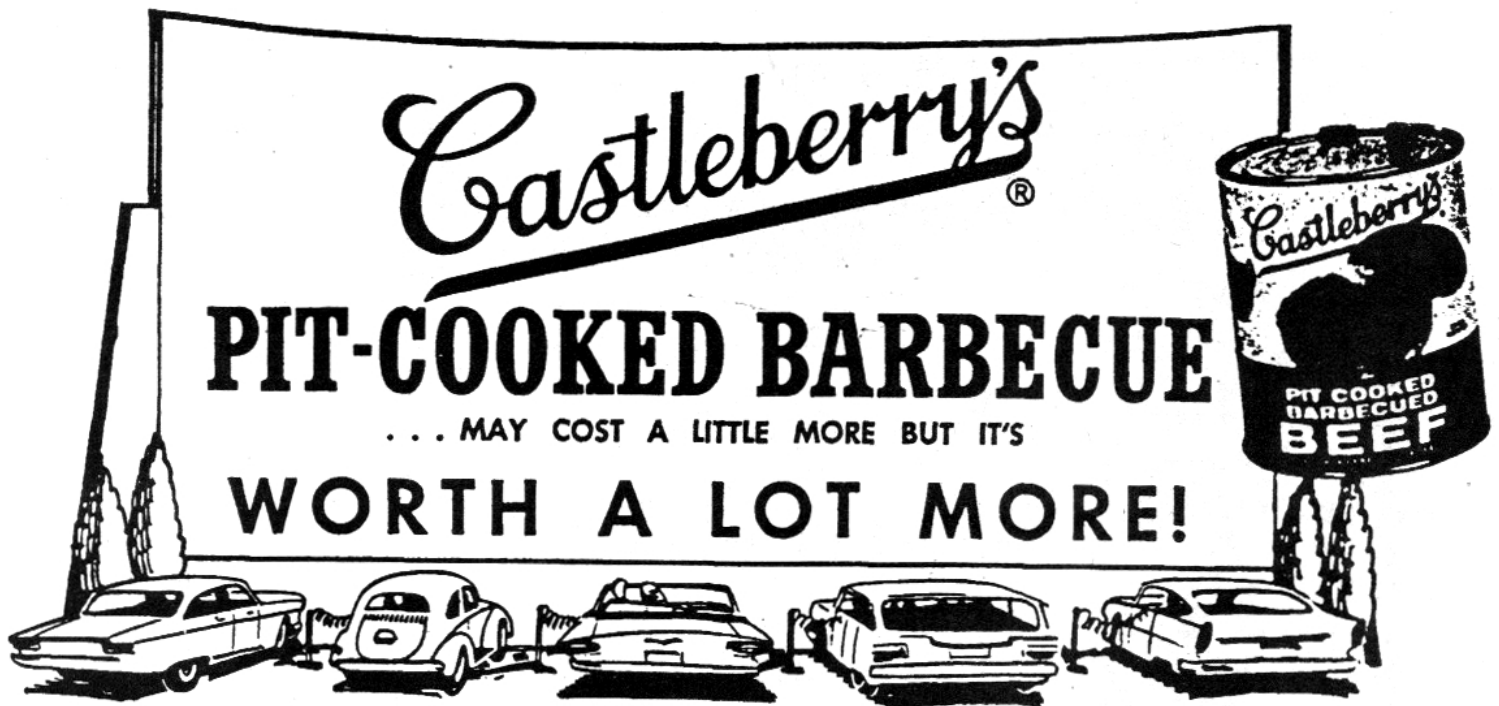
As you leave the theatre, folks...
PLEASE BE CAREFUL!



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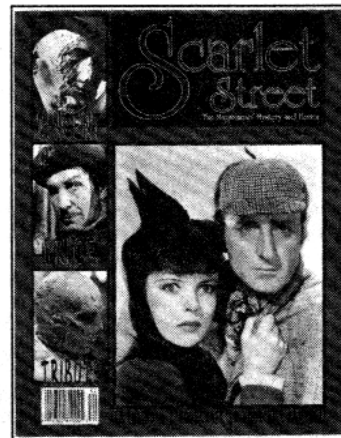
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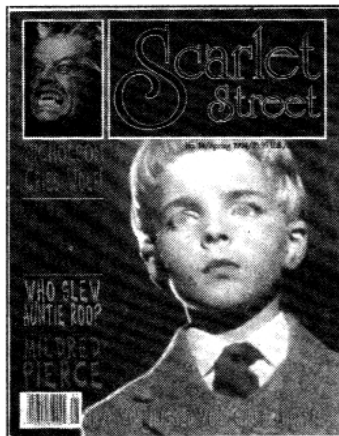
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Teruyoshi Nakano Interview

by David Milner

Translation by Yoshihiko Shibata

In the past, Teruyoshi Nakano worked as an assistant special effects director on films such as *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1964), *Ghidorah - The Three-Headed Monster* (1964) and *Destroy All Monsters* (1968). He also worked on *Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster* (1971), *Godzilla 1985* (1984) and a number of other films after he had been placed in charge of special effects. However, Mr. Nakano now teaches direction at the Yoyogi School of Animation and takes part in the production of rides for theme parks.

Cult Movies: I know that you began working as an assistant to Eiji Tsuburaya in 1962, so I would like to begin by asking a few questions about the earlier monster movies made by Toho. (Eiji Tsuburaya directed the special effects for *Godzilla - King Of The Monsters* (1954), *Godzilla Raids Again* (1955), *Rodan* (1956), *Mothra* (1961), *King Kong Escapes* (1967) and many other movies produced by the Toho Company Limited. He also created the *Ultraman* television series.) Why wasn't the footage in the American version of *Godzilla vs. Mothra* showing a number of United States Navy ships attacking Godzilla included in the Japanese version of the film?

Teruyoshi Nakano: The footage was shot for American audiences. The American distributor (American International Pictures) wanted the version of the film that was going to be released in the United States to have a longer running time than the Japanese version was going to have.

CM: A sequence showing Frankenstein battling a giant octopus was shot for but not included in *Frankenstein Conquers The World* (1965). Why wasn't the sequence used?

TN: It was a matter of running time as well. The running time of the movie was seven minutes shorter than the American distributor (United Productions of America) wanted it to be, so we had to go back and shoot the sequence after filming had already been completed. (It was not included in either the Japanese or the American version of the movie.)

CM: Were the Spiga and Gimantis puppets used in the production of *Son Of Godzilla* (1967) very difficult to manipulate? (Spiga, a giant spider, also appears in *Destroy All Monsters*. Only one of the giant praying mantises called Gimantis also appears in *Godzilla's Revenge* (1969) in new footage. The rest are seen in the film in stock footage.)

TN: Very.

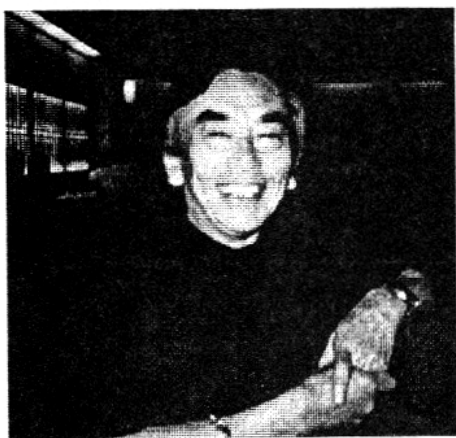
CM: Was the Spiga puppet especially difficult to manipulate since it has so many legs?

TN: We made six different Spiga puppets. They were all different sizes. The one that was the largest was the most difficult to manipulate.

CM: In both the Japanese and American versions of *Destroy All Monsters*, it is announced that Baragon is destroying the Arc de Triomphe de l'Etoile while Gorosaurus is seen doing so. Why is this? (Baragon, a quadrupedal prehistoric creature, has a very limited role in *Destroy All Monsters*. The monster has a much larger one in *Frankenstein Conquers The World*. Gorosaurus, a dinosaur resembling a tyrannosaur, also appears in *King Kong Escapes* in new footage and *Godzilla's Revenge* in stock footage.)

TN: I don't know.

CM: When Mr. Shibata and I spoke with Kenpachiro Satsuma last December, he told us that the Hedorah costume was very heavy because a large amount of material had gradually been added onto it. Why was the material added onto the costume? (Mr. Satsuma plays Hedorah, a monster created by pollution, in *Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster*. He also plays Gigan, a cyborg, in both *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972) and *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973). Since 1984, Mr. Satsuma has been playing Godzilla.)



TN: My recollection is that we made two different Hedorah costumes. One was quite light. The other was very heavy and bulky.

CM: For which scenes was the heavier costume used?

TN: It was used when we needed to show Hedorah's rickety movements.

CM: A laser beam is seen coming out of an opening in Gigan's forehead in some of the stills used to publicize *Godzilla vs. Gigan*. However, the cyborg never uses the beam in the movie. Why is this?

TN: I was very much interested in the sixth sense of human beings at the time. I knew that many statues of Buddha had auras around their heads, and I had read an article about strange rays coming out of the foreheads of human beings. So, I originally intended to have a ray come out of Gigan's forehead. However, I changed my mind because the ability didn't seem to fit the cyborg. It fit only human beings. That's why I didn't use it.

Gigan had a very strong and angular form. It was enough to express the great power of the monster. So, the laser beam wasn't needed.

CM: *Godzilla vs. Megalon* is the earliest Godzilla film in which Haruo Nakajima does not play Godzilla. Did any problems arise because another person had taken over the role?

TN: No - there were no special problems.

CM: Did you make the decision to portray Godzilla comically in *Godzilla vs. Megalon*?

TN: I made the decision. The Champion Festival versions of the earlier monster movies were being released at the time, so we had to produce a film that would appeal to children. (During the 1970s, Toho released edited versions of *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962), *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero* (1965), *Destroy All Monsters* and a number of its other monster movies on double or triple bills with animated features and superhero shows such as *Ultraman* and *Mirror Man*.)

CM: Who edited the Champion Festival versions of the film?

TN: Mr. Honda edited them. (Ishiro Honda directed many of Toho's monster movies.)

CM: In the Japanese trailer used to promote *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* (1974), there is an alternate to the sequence in the film showing MechaGodzilla emerging from its disguise as Godzilla. Why was the alternate sequence shot?

TN: It most likely consists only of test footage.

CM: *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* (1975) has a more serious tone than the other Godzilla films produced during the 1970s. Why is this?

TN: It was decided to portray Godzilla the way he had been in *Godzilla - King Of The Monsters*.

CM: Whose idea was it to do so?

TN: Mr. Tanaka's. (Tomoyuki Tanaka produced virtually all of Toho's monster movies.)

CM: Do you know why he made that decision?

TN: Toho wanted to revise the Godzilla series. So,

Mr. Tanaka decided to portray Godzilla the way he had been in 1954.

CM: I've heard that Ishiro Honda wasn't originally going to direct *Terror Of MechaGodzilla*. Is this true?

TN: Yes - that's correct.

CM: Was Jun Fukuda originally going to direct the film? (Mr. Fukuda directed *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* (1966), *Son Of Godzilla*, *Godzilla vs. Gigan*, *Godzilla vs. Megalon* and *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*.)

TN: The matter of choosing the director came up only after the script had been completed. I don't remember who the director was originally going to be.

CM: Was the so-called cybot Godzilla used in the production of *Godzilla 1985* difficult to control? (The cyborg/robot was just under five meters tall.)

TN: It was very difficult to control.

CM: Was it your idea to build it?

TN: It was my idea to build it. (The cybot Godzilla was used not only to show facial expressions that the Godzilla costume could not provide, but also to show Godzilla breathing.)

CM: I know that a television series based on *Tidal Wave* (1973) was aired in Japan shortly after the movie was released. Were you involved in the production of the television series?

TN: I wasn't involved in the production of the series.

CM: Was the series produced by Toho?

TN: Yes.

CM: In the book *Japanese Science Fiction, Fantasy And Horror Films*, Stuart Galbraith IV suggests that *The Last Days Of Planet Earth* (1974) is based at least in part on *The Last War* (1961). Is this true?

TN: Yes - it is.

CM: Mr. Galbraith also suggests in his book that the same model was used to depict the Alpha in *Latitude Zero* (1969) and the Gohten in *The War In Space* (1977). Is this true? (The Alpha is a submarine. The Gohten is a spaceship.)

TN: No - different models were used to depict the Alpha and the Gohten.

CM: What was Mr. Tanaka like?

TN: He had a lot of ideas. He was very decisive.

CM: Was Mr. Tanaka actively involved in the production of the monster movies made by Toho?

TN: He had a split personality. He would allow the members of the staff to do their work, but then he would begin making suggestions.

CM: What was your working relationship with Mr. Fukuda like?

TN: Mr. Fukuda and I worked on many films together. So, there was a very special type of relationship between us. It's very difficult to describe. It was as if we were related to each other. There was a very strong mutual understanding between us.

CM: Did you discuss ideas with each other during planning?

TN: There were three different types of approaches. We both had to read the scripts very carefully, but sometimes Mr. Fukuda would draw the storyboards, sometimes I would draw them, and sometimes we both drew them. However, I always made the final decisions regarding the special effects. (Storyboards are drawn to show how all of the scenes in a movie should be shot.)

CM: Did Mr. Fukuda allow you to choose which special effects footage would be used?

TN: I chose the footage that would be used. I would edit all of the special effects sequences and then turn them over to Mr. Fukuda.

CM: How was working with Mr. Honda on *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* different from working with Mr. Fukuda?

TN: Mr. Honda and I had known each other for a very long time, so it can be said that our friendship and mutual understanding were even greater than those between Mr. Fukuda and myself.

CM: How did you get to know Mr. Honda?

TN: I worked as an assistant director under Mr. Honda before I started working with Mr. Tsuburaya. Strangely enough, the first film Mr. Honda and I worked on together was distributed by Daiei instead of Toho. (*Night School* (1956) was distributed, but not produced, by the Daiei Motion Picture Company Limited.) If Mr. Honda had continued working with Daiei, we both might have ended up working on Gamera movies! (Daiei produced all eight of the Gamera movies.)

CM: Did you draw the storyboards for *Terror Of MechaGodzilla*?

TN: I drew the storyboards for all of the special effects sequences.

CM: What was Mr. Tsuburaya like?

TN: I have many stories to tell.

We went on location to shoot the sequence showing King Kong battling an octopus in *King Kong vs. Godzilla*. After we finished shooting the sequence, Mr. Tsuburaya ate the octopus.

The shot showing Baragon approaching a stable in *Frankenstein Conquers The World* could have been done very easily. It could have been a composite shot with real horses. However, Mr. Tsuburaya insisted that we instead use puppets. When I asked him why, he replied, "It's enjoyable - it's funny."

Mr. Tsuburaya would become very preoccupied with his work. One day, while he was working on a film, a woman came up to Mr. Tsuburaya and he said, "It's been quite a long time." He couldn't remember who the woman was. She was his wife.

Mr. Tsuburaya was a man who enjoyed making movies very much. He also was very neat. He always wore suits and ties to work. The studio was quite sacred to Mr. Tsuburaya.

CM: How were Mr. Tsuburaya and Mr. Honda different from each other?

TN: They both enjoyed making movies. They both also took their work very seriously, no matter what type of film on which they were working. So, I think they were more alike than different.

Mr. Honda and Mr. Tsuburaya would inspire each other. They would create scenes that were not included in the scripts. Mr. Fukuda and I had the same kind of relationship. We also created scenes that were not in the scripts.

CM: Mr. Honda would tell actors with whom he was working how they should walk, how they should move their arms and so on. Did Mr. Tsuburaya do this as well?

TN: Mr. Tsuburaya was very shy. He was just the opposite of Mr. Honda in that regard.

Mr. Honda choreographed the movements of the aliens in *The Mysterians* (1957) and *Godzilla vs. Monster Zero*. He also choreographed some of the dancing of the natives in *King Kong vs. Godzilla* and *Godzilla vs. Mothra*.

While we were working on *Godzilla vs. Mothra*, Koji Kajita, the assistant director, and I decided to write lyrics about Mothra. Mr. Kajita could speak French, so he wrote the lyrics in that language. However, he pronounced them the way they would be pronounced in English. After that, Mr. Kajita translated the lyrics into Esperanto. That's the process by which they were created. (Esperanto was created by the United Nations in an attempt to provide a means by which everyone in the world could directly communicate with each other. The thinking was that everyone would learn their native language and Esperanto.)

CM: Teisho Arikawa left Toho after working on *Yog - Monster From Space* (1970). Do you know why he left? (Mr. Arikawa worked as a special effects cinematographer on *Varan - The Unbelievable* (1959), *Gorath* (1962), *Atragon* (1963), *Dagora - The Space Monster* (1964), *War Of The Gargantuas* (1966) and many of Toho's other monster movies. He was promoted to special effects director in 1967.)

TN: You'd have to ask Mr. Arikawa. However, I know that he wanted to be a producer instead of a director.

CM: *Frankenstein Conquers The World* was originally going to be called *Frankenstein vs. Godzilla*. Why

was *Godzilla* replaced with *Baragon*?

TN: I know that the scripts went through a number of revisions, but I don't know why *Baragon* was pitted against *Frankenstein*.

CM: *Godzilla vs. The Sea Monster* was originally titled *King Kong vs. Ebirah*. Why was *King Kong* replaced with *Godzilla*?

TN: I don't know. *Godzilla* was in the first draft of script that I saw.

CM: Were all of the other monsters in the film originally going to be in it?

TN: *Ebirah* wasn't going to be in the film. Instead, a giant octopus was. (*Ebirah*, a giant lobster, also appears in *Godzilla's Revenge* in stock footage.)

CM: Yoshimitsu Banno wrote a script for a sequel to *Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster* in which *Godzilla* and *Hedorah* were going to face each other in Africa, but the sequel was not made. Do you know why it wasn't made? (Mr. Banno directed *Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster*.)

TN: I don't know why.

CM: A few *Godzilla* movies were announced but not produced between 1975 and 1984. Do you know anything about them? (Among them are *Resurrection Of Godzilla* and *Godzilla vs. Gargantua*.)

TN: After *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* was released, many Toho employees thought that there would be no more *Godzilla* movies made. However, some thought that there could be another one made if it were very different. So, several such films were planned.

CM: In what year did you begin working for Toho?

TN: 1959. I first worked on a war film. After that, I took part in the production of *Japan Birth* (1959), but I did not work on the special effects sequences in the movie. (*Japan Birth*, like *Yamato Takeru* (1994), is based on *Kojiki*, the mythological story of the creation of Japan.)

CM: What is the name of the war film?

TN: *Submarine I-57 Does Not Surrender*.

CM: You served as the special effects director on a number of episodes of the *Zone Fighter* (1973) television series. How was this different from working on monster movies? (The series is very much like *Ultraman*. *Godzilla*, *Ghidrah* and *Gigan* all make guest appearances in it.)

TN: We were shooting footage not only for a small screen instead of a large one, but also for a standard size one instead of a wide one. That was the most significant difference.

I think the best screen size for monster movies is standard size. Giant monsters seem to be huge not because they appear to be so wide, but instead because they appear to be so tall.

CM: Were you more rushed when you worked on *Zone Fighter* than you were when you worked on films?

TN: The schedule was very tight.

CM: Many years ago, Greg Shoemaker wrote in the *Japanese Fantasy Film Journal*, "Teruyoshi Nakano...is at his best when required to deliver animated rays and force fields and spectacular pyrotechnics." Do you agree with Mr. Shoemaker's statement?

TN: Many Japanese fans feel the same way. I think of monster movies as fantasy films. So, I think that animated rays and explosions are very important factors in them.

I always took great care in preparing the pyrotechnics. Fire, like water, is one of the most difficult elements to control.

CM: Which of the movies on which you served as special effects director are your favorites?

TN: I like all of them, so I can't choose any favorites. However if you insist, I think it would be wise for me to say that *Tidal Wave* is my favorite. (*Tidal Wave* was more successful than any of the other science fiction films on which Mr. Nakano served as special effects director.)

CM: Which of the *Godzilla* films on which you served as special effects director is your favorite?

TN: *Godzilla 1985*. I also especially like *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*. It turned out the way I imagined it

would before shooting began.

CM: Which of Toho's older monster movies are your favorites?

TN: I was most influenced by *King Kong vs. Godzilla*. It is the first monster movie on which I worked.

CM: How do you like the newer *Godzilla* films? (They include *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989), *Godzilla vs. Ghidrah* (1991), *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992) and *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* (1993). The twenty-first *Godzilla* film, *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*, is scheduled to be released in Japan on December 10th.)

TN: They are quite enjoyable.

CM: Some fans have criticized Koichi Kawakita's work because they feel he uses optical effects (radioactive breath, electrical rays and so on) too much and doesn't have the monsters wrestle with each other enough. Do you think that this is a valid criticism? (Mr. Kawakita began working for Toho as an assistant cinematographer in 1962. He was made special effects director in 1989.)

TN: Mr. Kawakita's style most likely stems from his personality. He is very technically oriented. His approach is very different from mine.

CM: You earlier mentioned the Gamera movies. What do you think of them?

TN: They are enjoyable.

CM: How do you feel about Daiei making a new Gamera movie? (*Gamera - Giant Monster Air Battle* is scheduled to be released in Japan in March. It is going to be produced by Daiei and distributed by Toho.)

TN: If I were assigned to the Gamera film, I would have to work very hard because I would have to find a new approach to take. I would have to work even harder on the new Gamera film than I would on one of the new *Godzilla* movies because it would be so difficult to find a new approach.

CM: You now take part in the production of rides for theme parks. Is this correct?

TN: I have worked on many of them.

CM: Are you still employed by Toho?

TN: I still work for Toho.

CM: So you just switched from working on films to working on rides for theme parks?

TN: I received a lot of offers to work on rides for theme parks, but I never quit my job as a special effects director. I think that theme parks provide the best means of entertaining people these days.

I would have like to have met Walt Disney. I would have asked him why he chose to work on theme parks instead of movies. I think he would have come up with a better answer than I could.

CM: On which rides did you work in the past?

TN: I took part in the production of the rides at Space World in Kyushu. It took us four years to plan and build those rides. I also took part in the production of the rides at a water park in Kyushu.

CM: Mr. Shibata told me that you are going to travel to Hokkaido tomorrow to work on a ride. Is this correct?

TN: That's right.

CM: What is the ride going to be like?

TN: It will be about Earth. Volcanoes, climate, people - everything will be included.

CM: How did you like *Jurassic Park* (1993)?

TN: It seemed to me like a film featuring very good suitation. (Suitation is the term used to describe the technique of portraying giant monsters with people in costumes.)

CM: Some people were disappointed by *Jurassic Park* because they felt that the plot was too limited. Do you agree with this criticism?

TN: Yes - I agree with it.

CM: How do you feel about TriStar Pictures producing a *Godzilla* movie in the United States?

TN: I am pleased because a new approach will be taken.

CM: Will Toho continue to make *Godzilla* films if TriStar makes a series of them?

TN: Probably.

CM: What do you think the next few *Godzilla* films that Toho produces should be like?

TN: Toho must take a different approach. It will be very difficult. ■

Kenpachiro Satsuma Interview: Take 2

by David Milner

Translation by Yoshihiko Shibata

Kenpachiro Satsuma began working of Godzilla movies in 1971. That is when he played Hedora, a monster created by pollution which appears in *Godzilla vs. The Smog Monster* (1971). During the following two years, Mr. Satsuma played the cyborg Gigan. It is seen in both *Godzilla vs. Gigan* (1972) and *Godzilla vs. Megalon* (1973). After the person who was going to play Godzilla in *Godzilla 1985* (1984) quit, Mr. Satsuma took over the role. Since then, he has worked on five other Godzilla movies, the most recent of which is *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*.

Cult Movies: When did filming on *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* begin?

Kenpachiro Satsuma: June 27th.

CM: What scenes have been shot so far?

KS: We have finished shooting only the battle between Godzilla and the Japanese Self-Defense Force in Kyushu. (Godzilla is attacked by a number of naval ships during the battle.)

CM: Was a new Godzilla costume made for *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*?

KS: We are using the Godzilla costume from *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* (1993) for the scenes showing Godzilla in the ocean. This is because the costume that we use for them has to be expendable. For all of the other scenes, we are using a new Godzilla costume.

CM: Is the new Godzilla costume very different from the one that was made for *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*?

KS: It's bulkier and taller. In addition, the tail is much longer.

The new costume has a mechanism in it that no other Godzilla costume had. It allows the head to move not only up and down, but also from side to



side. The new costume also is the first one equipped with an air duct. It runs from the tail to the neck. (When Mr. Satsuma is inside the costume, his head is located in the costume's neck.)

CM: Does the duct allow you to stay in the costume for a much longer period of time?

KS: Yes—it does. (It makes it easier for Mr. Satsuma to breathe.)

Unfortunately, the new costume, like all of the other Godzilla costumes that have been made, is very heavy. In fact, it's ten kilograms heavier than the Godzilla costume from *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*.

CM: Who is playing Space Godzilla? (Space Godzilla is created when a cell from Biollante, the

monster produced through the combination of cells from Godzilla, a woman and a rose in *Godzilla vs. Biollante* (1989), is sucked into a black hole in outer space.)

KS: The man's name is Ryo Hariya.

CM: Who is playing MOGERA? (In *The Mysterians* (1957), Mogera, a giant robot, is constructed by aliens from outer space. However, in *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*, MOGERA (Mobile Operation Godzilla Expert Robot Aero-Type) is constructed by the United Nations Godzilla Countermeasures Center.)

Wataru Fukuda is playing MOGERA. (He plays MechaGodzilla in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*.)

CM: Who is playing Little Godzilla? (Baby Godzilla, a member of the same species as Godzilla, is introduced in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*. He is called Little Godzilla in *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* because he has grown from a height of five feet to thirty meters.)

KS: A professional midget wrestler is playing him.

CM: Space Godzilla has a large crystal on each of his shoulders. Does he have crystals running down his back as well?

KS: Yes.

CM: How does Space Godzilla travel through space?

KS: He travels through space the same way Gigan does. (Gigan transmutes itself into a diamond-shaped crystal before travelling through space.)

CM: I've seen a pre-production sketch of Space Godzilla in which he is red instead of blue. Was he originally going to be red?

KS: He was going to be red at one point.

CM: I have heard that the final battle between Godzilla, Space Godzilla and MOGERA is supposed to take place in Fukuoka. Is this true?

KS: Yes—that's right. (Fukuoka residents signed petitions requesting that a Godzilla film be set in their city.)

CM: What role does Little Godzilla play in *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*?

KS: Baby Godzilla goes to live on Basu Island after the events in *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* take place. Godzilla doesn't live with him, but he stays nearby. When Space Godzilla comes to Earth, he confines Little Godzilla with crystals. So, Godzilla fights Space Godzilla to save Little Godzilla.

CM: What is Mothra's role in the movie?

KS: Mothra acts as a messenger. He can be seen only by Miki Saegusa. (Miki Saegusa, a psychic woman with a telepathic link to Godzilla, is introduced in *Godzilla vs. Biollante*. The character appears in every Godzilla film produced since.)

CM: What message does Mothra send?

KS: Mothra warns that Space Godzilla is going to attack Earth. (At the end of *Godzilla vs. Mothra* (1992), Mothra is seen flying in outer space on his way to divert an asteroid that is on a collision course with Earth.)

CM: I've heard that Mothra was originally going to be turned into a cyborg. Is this true?

KS: Mothra was originally going to be killed at the end of *Godzilla vs. Mothra*. So, Koichi Kawakita thought of turning him into a cyborg called MechaMothra. It was going to look more like a dragonfly than like Mothra. (Mr. Kawakita has been serving as the special effects director on the Godzilla series since 1989.)

CM: Of how many pieces is the MOGERA costume made up?

KS: It's made up of three pieces—body, skirt and legs.

CM: Was the MechaGodzilla costume also made up of three pieces?

KS: It was made up to two pieces.

CM: When will filming on *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* be completed?

KS: In the middle of September.

CM: When will post-production work on the movie be completed? (This includes editing, scoring and so on.)

KS: Probably in early November.

CM: When is *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* going to be released?

KS: It is going to be released on December 10th. ■



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Yukiko Takayama INTERVIEW

by David Milner

Translation by Yoshihiko Shibata

Yukiko Takayama wrote the script for *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* (1975). She also wrote a number of other screenplays and two novels.

Cult Movies: I've heard that you attended a screenwriting school. What was the name of the school?

Yukiko Takayama: Scenario Center.

CM: Was it run by one of the motion picture studios or was it an independent school?

YT: It was an independent school.

CM: What kind of courses were offered? How long did it take to graduate?

YT: The students had to write twenty short scenarios, and the curriculum took one year to complete.

After completing the standard curriculum, I entered an advanced class in which plot development was covered. Two or three months after that class had started, I heard that Toho was holding a story contest for a sequel to *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla* (1974). So, I sent in an entry. (All of the *Godzilla* films were produced by the Toho Company Limited.)

CM: What were the entrance requirements for the Scenario Center?

YT: There were no entrance examinations.

CM: Did you have to submit a sample of your writing?

YT: No—I didn't. At the time, the Japanese motion picture industry was not doing very well, so the studios were looking for new screenwriters.

By the way, Hiroshi Kashiwabara, the person who wrote the script for *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*, also attended the Scenario Center. (*Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla* is scheduled to be released in Japan on December 10th.)

CM: Who chose the winner of the story contest?

YT: It was chosen by Kenji Tokoro, a producer who worked for Toho. He told me that Tomoyuki Tanaka was interested in my entry and wanted to meet me. So, I went to see him, and he told me to go ahead and write a script. (Mr. Tanaka produced virtually all of the monster movies made by Toho.)

CM: Was the script the first one that you wrote?

YT: It was my debut work. However, while *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* was being produced, scripts that I'd written for a number of television shows were accepted.

CM: Did you write the script entirely by yourself?

YT: Yes—I wrote it by myself.

CM: Was the original version of the script any different from the final one?

YT: Titanosaurus was originally going to be called Titan. Also, there were originally going to be two Titans. They were going to join together to create one very powerful monster.

CM: Did budget constraints force any changes to be made?

YT: All of Tokyo was originally going to be destroyed during the battle between the monsters. However, Toho limited the scope of the destruction in order to save money.

My original version of the script focused on Katsura Mafune, the girl who had been turned into a cyborg by aliens from outer space. Even after she had been altered, she had emotions. As long as this idea was not removed from the script, I didn't care all that much about what was done with it.

CM: Did Ishiro Honda offer you any advice? (Mr. Honda directed *Terror Of MechaGodzilla*. He also directed *Godzilla—King Of The Monsters* (1954), *King Kong vs. Godzilla* (1962), *Destroy All Monsters* (1968)



and many of the monster movies produced by Toho.)

YT: He suggested that I change a few sequences.

He also suggested that I cut the sequence at the very beginning in which the submarine sent to recover the remnants of MechaGodzilla was seen on the surface of the water being readied for diving. Mr. Honda thought that it would be better to begin with the submarine already underwater. (MechaGodzilla is destroyed at the end of *Godzilla vs. MechaGodzilla*. It is rebuilt and renamed MechaGodzilla 2 in *Terror Of MechaGodzilla*.)

By the way, Kenshou Yamashita, the director of *Godzilla vs. Space Godzilla*, served as the chief assistant director on *Terror Of MechaGodzilla*.

CM: How did you feel when you saw *Terror Of MechaGodzilla* for the first time?

YT: I generally was pleased with the way it turned out. However, I was a little disappointed because the scenes showing Tokyo being destroyed were so limited in scope in comparison to what I'd originally envisioned.

CM: What writing have you done since?

YT: I've written eight other movie scripts.

CM: Have you done any other type of writing?

YT: I wrote some television screenplays. I also wrote two novels about a Christian samurai leader named Otomoto.

CM: How do you feel about TriStar Pictures producing a *Godzilla* film in the United States?

YT: When I heard that an American motion picture studio was going to produce a *Godzilla* film, I said, "Of course!"

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CONFIDENTIAL REPORT

Orson Welles is Mr. Arkadin.

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Uncut Hammer with Ingrid Pitt. 1970

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New Zealand thriller. Widescreen.

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Franco's uncut *Man Hunter*.

THE DEVIL RIDES OUT

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Jean-Pierre Melville directs Alain Delin & Catherine Deneuve. 1972.

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Franco Nero and his coffin. Widescreen.

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Sequel with Franco Nero.

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Lucio Fulci's uncut giallo. English & widescreen.

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Catherine Deneuve and Marcello Mastroianni, by Marco Ferren.

DRACULA A.D. 1972

Hammer horror.

DRACULA PRINCE OF DARKNESS

Hammer. 1965

DRAGONS FOREVER

Jackie Chan, dubbed.

DUST DEVIL

Richard Stanley's 105 min. uncut version.

EFFI BRIEST

Widescreen Fassbinder. 1974

EL TOPO

Jodorowsky's uncut 123 min.

EVIL FORCE

Sick revenge killing with Christopher Lee.

FACES

John Cassavetes. 1968

FACE TO FACE

Spaghetti Western widescreen

THE FALLS

Rare Peter Greenaway. 1980

FALSTAFF; CHIMES AT MIDNIGHT

Orson Welles & Shakespeare. Widescreen.

FASCINATION

Jean Rollin's best, widescreen, with Bridget Lahaie. Subtitled

FEMALE VAMPIRE

Jess Franco's widescreen *Bare Breasted Countess*. 1973

F FOR FAKE

Orson Welles directs.

FIRST MISSION

Jackie Chan and Sam Hung.

FIVE DOLLS FOR AN AUGUST MOON

Mario Bava with Edwige Fenech. Dubbed widescreen

FLAVIA THE HERETIC

Nuns go nuts. Widescreen in English.

FRANKENSTEIN MUST BE DESTROYED

Hammer horror. 1969

LE FRISON DES VAMPIRES

Jean Rollin's *Thrill of the Vampires*. English.

GHOSTS OF THE CIVIL DEAD

Australian prison flick with Nick Cave 1988

GOD OF GAMBLERS

Hong Kong action widescreen in English

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Marco Ferren's *Blow Out*. French with English subtitles

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HOUSE BY THE CEMETERY

Lucio Fulci's uncut widescreen.

I BOUGHT A VAMPIRE A MOTORCYCLE

Uncut. Directed by Dirk Cambell

INFERNO

Dario Argento's widescreen.

INSEMINOID

Ultra gory Alien clone. Widescreen.

JACK BE NIMBLE

New Zealand Lynch meets Chainsaw Massacre.

KEOMA... THE VIOLENT BREED

Franco Nero, spaghetti western. Widescreen

KILL AND PRAY

Carlo Lizzani's widescreen western with Lou Lizzani. 1967

THE KILLER

Woo's widescreen, with great dubbing.

KILLER NUN

Anita Ekberg and Joe Dallesandro. Widescreen

KISS ME MONSTER

Jess Franco's sequel to *Sadisterotica*. Widescreen.

L-SHAPED ROOM

Leslie Caron, 1963.

LET SLEEPING CORPSES LIE

Aka *Breakfast at the Manchester Morgue*.

LIPSTICK ON YOUR COLLAR

Dennis Potter's (6 Hours! On 2 tapes: \$40.00)

LISA AND THE DEVIL

Mario Bava's widescreen. 1972

THE LIVING DEAD GIRL

Jean Rollin's best and most violent. Subtitled in English. Widescreen

LUST FOR A VAMPIRE

Hammer horror.

MAD MAX 1

Richard Stanley and with original soundtrack.

MARK OF THE DEVIL

Witch-hunting with Herbert Lom. Widescreen.

MASK OF SATAN

British version of *Black Sunday*. Widescreen.

MASTER WITH CRACKED FINGERS

Early dubbed Jackie Chan. Slightly widescreen.

MEET THE FEEBLES

Peter Jackson's wild Muppet sex and gore show.

MOUNTAIN OF THE CANNIBAL GOD

Ursula Andress, widescreen & uncut.

MY LUCKY STARS

Dubbed Jackie Chan.

THE NANNY

Bette Davis and Hammer Studios

NIGHT TRAIN MURDERS

In English. Directed by Aldo Lado.

THE NORTHERNERS

Twin Peaks style Dutch black comedy.

NOSFERATU THE VAMPIRE

With Klaus Kinski. Both English and German versions available.

OMEGA MAN

Charlton Heston widescreen.

ONE MILLION YEARS B.C.

Hammer. Hanyhausen and Raquel, uncut.

OPENING NIGHT

John Cassavetes 1977

OPERA

Argento's uncut directors version.

OPERATION CONDOR

Jackie Chan's *Armour of God 2*. Widescreen, dubbed.

ORPHEE

Jean Cocteau's classic. 1950 Subtitled in English.

PATRICK

Richard Franklyn's cult thriller.

PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

Hammer horror with Herbert Lom. 1962.

PICNIC AT HANGING ROCK

Peter Weir's 1975

PIERROT LE FOU

Jean-Paul Belmondo by Jean-Luc Godard. Widescreen.

POLICE STORY 3

Jackie Chan's newest. Dubbed.

POSSESSION

Zulawski's uncut 123 min.

PROJECT A

Dubbed Jackie Chan

PROJECT A PART 2

More Jackie, also dubbed.

QUATERMASS AND THE PIT

Hammer's third.

QUATERMASS 2

Enemy from space.

QUE VIVA MEXICO!

Sergei Eisenstein's "unfinished" masterpiece.

THE REPTILE

Hammer Films uncut 1966

RETURN OF THE LIVING DEAD

Dan O'Bannon's brain-muncher widescreen

REPULSION

Polanski's with Catherine Deneuve.

RETURN OF THE EVIL DEAD

2nd Blind Dead, widescreen.

REQUIEM FOR A VAMPIRE

Jean Rollin's *Caged Virgins* widescreen. 1971

REVENGE OF FRANKENSTEIN & CURSE OF THE MUMMY'S TOMB

Hammer double Feature!

SADISTEROTICA

SAMURAI FILMS

A NEGLECTED GENRE

FILM SURVEY BY CHRIS D.

It's possible that some of you are missing out on some of the best motion pictures ever produced on this planet — the Japanese Samurai films!

Just what exactly is a samurai or chanbara film? While it is true that you could take the protagonists in a number of samurai films, cut their top-knot of hair, get rid of the sword and costuming, replace it all with a cowboy hat, jeans and a six-gun and have an American Western, it is also true that many samurai films could not be so easily transposed to our American counterpart genre. For all intents and purposes, as far as technological achievements, medicine, contact with the outside world, etc., Japan was still in the midst of the feudal middle ages until as late as 1870, and, in some outlying provinces as late as 1900. This, in and of itself, precludes many western film genre characteristics as does the fact that the Japanese people (comprised of a polyglot mix of Chinese, Russian, Eskimo Indian and indigenous natives) settled in Japan many centuries before Christ. Although there were many similar hardships for rural inhabitants in regards to privation and starvation, the one big thing missing was America's frontier expansionist/settler mentality, the melting pot of people seeking freedom and a better, more prosperous life in America even as they stole from and killed the American Indian to achieve it. Japan's caste or class system before 1890 also created a different set of conflicts which the American western film could never have.

What one also finds in most samurai films that one will not find in the American western (except perhaps in a select few of the films of Anthony Mann, Budd Boetticher and John Ford) is a ruggedly transcendent individual spirituality.

An interesting anomaly is that the Italian spaghetti western, though lacking the spiritual transcendence, was as much influenced by samurai films as they were influenced by their American western counterpart. In turn, especially in samurai films produced between 1968-1979, there is an unmistakable spaghetti western influence. Skeletal plots/storylines, music — and even actors in the case of Tatsuya Nakadai appearing as a psychotic Mexican villain in the spaghetti opus *Today It's Me, Tomorrow It's You* (co-written by Dario Argento) — became interchangeable. As world cinema became integrated into a global movie village, a cosmically circular array of influences and styles became progressively more obvious. Dare I use the word synchronicity?

In listing the following, some of my favorite samurai films, I have lumped all the films of one samurai film series or one samurai director into individual entries, so as to include more film titles.

1. Lone Wolf & Child Series:

Lone Wolf And Child - Sword Of Vengeance (Kozure Okami - Ko No Kashi Ube Kashi Tsukamatsuru) 1972, 84 Min. (Orig. release: 95 Min.) Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Tomisaburo Wakayama, Akihiro Tomikawa, Yunosuke Ito, VHS (Japan) TOHO

Lone Wolf And Child - Baby Cart At The River Styx (Kozure Okami - Sanzu No Kawa No Ubaguruma) 1972 85 Min. (Orig release: 85 Min.)



Lone Wolf & Child #3 — Flying On The Winds Of Death In A Baby Cart, aka Lightning Swords Of Death.

Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Tomisaburo Wakayama, Akihiro Tomikawa, Kashi Matsuo, Minoru Oki VHS(Japan) TOHO

Lone Wolf And Child - Flying On The Winds Of Death In A Baby Cart (Kozure Okami - Shi Ni Kaze Ni Mukai Ubaguruma) aka *Lightning Swords Of Death* aka *Lupine Wolf* 1972, 81 Min. (orig. release: 89 Min.) Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Tomisaburo Wakayama, Akihiro Tomikawa, Go Kato, Ichiro Nakatani VHS (Japan) TOHO U. S. dubbed VHS: J. A. Video Productions

Lone Wolf And Child - Heart Of A Father, Heart Of A Child (Kozure Okami - Oyo No Ko Koro Ko No Koro) aka *Baby Cart In Peril* 1972 81 Min. (Orig. release: 104 Min.) Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Tomisaburo Wakayama, Akihiro Tomikawa, Yoichi Hayashi VHS (Japan) TOHO

Lone Wolf And Child - Path Between Heaven And Hell (Kozure Okami - Meifumado) aka *Baby Cart In The Land Of Demons* 1973 82 Min. (Orig release: 89 Min.) Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Tomisaburo Wakayama, Akihiro Tomikawa, Minoru Oki, Michiyo Yasuda, Bin Amatsu VHS (Japan) TOHO

Lone Wolf And Child - Daigoro! We're Going To Hell! (Kozure Okami - Jigoku E Daigoro Ikuzu) aka *White Heaven In Hell* 1974 82 min. (orig. release: 84 Min.) Dir. Yoshiyuki Kuroda w/Tomisaburo Wakayama, Akihiro Tomikawa, Isao Kimura, Minoru Oki.

The first three *Lone Wolf* films were produced by Shintaro Katsu (star of the *Zatoichi*, *Blind Swordsman* series), the second three by *Lone Wolf* star (and Katsu's real-life brother) the late Tomisaburo Wakayama. All were produced for Toho Film Company. All six were adapted by Kazuo Koike from the mega comic series (collected in 28 vol-

umes of 250 pages each) written by Koike and drawn by Goseki Kojima in the sixties. Production was originally started in 1969 on the first three pictures. Films #1 through 4 were released in 1972, #5 in 1973, and #6 in 1974. There was more than enough material for at least another half dozen films, but due to the plunging attendance across the board in all Japanese movie houses, it was decided to transfer the series to television. Kinnosuke Nakamura (changing his name to Kinnosuke Yorozuya, and star of numerous samurai films himself) took over the role of Itto Ogami played by Wakayama. In the films, Akihiro Tomikawa played the role of Ogami's infant son, Daigoro.

The film series is the apex of the samurai film genre. There've been other films as excellent, such as *Tenchu* or *Heaven's Punishment* (*Hitokiri*), *The Bodyguard* (*Yojimbo*), *Official Gold* (*Goyokin*), *Hunter In The Dark* (*Yami No Kariudo*), etc. But the *Lone Wolf* series has a balance of reality and fantasy, a detail of storytelling, a creation of an entire world that raises the series to the top. The films are incredibly exciting and entertaining; they have the visceral stimulation of the best of the Hong Kong period adventures currently in release as well as the refined pictorial beauty of an "art" film (but without the pretensions). There is also a lyricism and perspective on nature and man's place in the world that balances the brutally hellish carnage. In fact, my main criticism of *Shogun Assassin*, the butchering and cobbling-together of *Baby Cart At The River Styx* with ten minutes from *Sword Of Vengeance*, is that the lyricism, which makes the brutality all the more horrifying, is gone. It reduces these beautiful masterpieces to the same level of meaning as the most mediocre kung-fu films coming over in the mid-'70s. The Mark Lindsay score for *Shogun Assassin* also blows, especially when one stands it alongside the original excellent score by Eiken Sakurai.

Shintaro Katsu — already operating from a position of financial power as star of the very successful *Zatoichi*, *The Blind Swordsman* series at Dai-ichi Pictures and at the helm of his own relatively new production company — secured the movie rights to the *Lone Wolf And Child* comics. The story goes that he very much wanted to establish his older brother (3 years Katsu's senior) as a major star, at least as big a star as Katsu himself. Wakayama and Katsu had both started out in their mid-twenties as film actors in the 1950s.

As the sixties progressed, Wakayama seemed to become typecast in comic roles unless he was playing a villain. Although top-billed in his own yakuza film series, the action/comedy *Scoundrel* (*Cokudo*) string of films, it was as a bumbling small-time yakuza boss. Wakayama, though, had as versatile a range as his brother. Katsu was also looked upon as a comic actor but because of his "Star" clout received an even share of dramatic roles. To give his brother the respect he was due, Katsu cast him as the stoic Ogami character. Wakayama's previous appearances in yakuza films, even his more serious samurai roles pre *Baby Cart/Lone Wolf* did not prepare one for the startling revelation of his Ogami characterization. Quiet, introspective, cool, calm and collected where he was before always loud-mouthed, hotheaded, boorish. And, although built like a bulldog, as Ogami he became strangely graceful in an astonishing display of martial arts from sword to judo to acrobatic leaps and somersaults.

In the first film of the series, *Sword Of Vengeance*, The Lone Wolf, Itto Ogami, now a wandering assassin for hire traveling with his son in a wooden baby cart, had lost his position as decapitator for the Shogun when betrayed by his arch-rival Lord Retsudo Yagyū (played by Yunnosuke Ito in the

first film and Tatsuo Endo and Minoru Oki in the remainder of the series).

Having had to execute in infant heir/lord of an errant clan earlier in the day, Ogami returns home to find his wife disturbed by insomnia from nightmares concerning those the Shogun has had Ogami execute. Talk of burial mounds surrounded by ghosts and pools of blood doesn't phase Ogami, and he reassures his wife that "she's just tired." He takes babe-in-arms, Daigoro, with him to the family temple. Later, approaching the wee hours, Ogami hears a scream and returns to the main house to find his wife murdered by Yagyu's ninjas. Pre-occupied with grief over his dead wife, Ogami doesn't see another ninja plant an altar plaque displaying the Shogun's crest in his temple (which will be used as evidence to support the claim Ogami is a traitor and already praying for the spirit of the soon-to-be-killed Shogun). Put under house arrest, Ogami slays the men who've come for him and defies Lord Yagyu who watches from a nearby bridge. Later, Ogami lays a sword and ball in front of Daigoro. If Daigoro chooses the ball, he will join his mother in heaven; if he chooses the sword Ogami will take him on the road between heaven and hell as fellow fugitive seeking vengeance. These events are told in flashback as Ogami pushes Daigoro along country backroads in the wooden baby cart (the cart is furnished with numerous swords, knives, folding lances and in later episodes, gun barrels).

Ogami is hired by a clan to prevent the assassination of their tubercular leader. He travels to a remote village lorded over by the sadistic, beastlike killers who've been enlisted to waylay the clan retainer. Through his stoic demeanor he manages to avoid confrontation until the final massacre.

The second film in the series, *Baby Cart At The River Styx*, sees Yagyu hire female assassin Kashiro Matsuo, and the women ninjas under her to avenge the death of his sons by Ogami. When Ogami manages to wipe out all of her female killers, Matsuo engages three master slayers, each with their trademark weapon: iron claws, a spiked club and spiked metal gloves. The odyssey of carnage ranges from the high seas to desert dunes along a desolate shore. In the desert sequence, the *Lone Wolf* series enjoys possibly its most surreal imagery with Ogami plucking killers out of the sand by their heads.

Flying On The Winds Of Death In A Baby Cart is the third in the series. Ogami and Daigoro become involved with a poor teenage girl who's destined to work as a whore in a yakuza brothel after her mother's death. Coincidentally the yakuza madam/leader recognizes Ogami and desires vengeance - he'd accidentally amputated her father's arm (a former shogunate retainer) when a reluctant candidate for hara-kiri rambunctiously tried to escape decapitation. Lord Yagyu also weilds his influence by manipulating a corrupt local daimyo (magistrate or province leader) to have his men attack Ogami. This entry was released virtually intact - albeit atrociously dubbed by Columbia - as *Lightning Swords Of Death*.

In the fourth film, *Heart Of A Father, Heart Of A Child*, Yagyu once again throws everything he as at Ogami. Ogami, who is renting his sword out for killing if he believes the cause is just, seeks out a tattooed swordswoman attempting to avenge honor lost to her evil, sex-driven sword teacher. Yagyu's disowned and sole-surviving (legitimate) son shows up - he'd shamed the Yagyu name in a duel with Ogami, winning by disarming Ogami but pointing his blade inadvertently at the watching-from-the-sidelines Shogun, a definite no-no. Because of this, Yagyu had secretly banished him, substituting a look-alike in hara-kiri to save face. This had been the seed of Lord Yagyu's bet royal

of Ogami (Yagyu had originally hoped for the job of chief decapitator for one of his other sons.). At the end, during a huge battle, Ogami wipes out everyone. Nearly dead himself he manages to blind Lord Yagyu in one eye. Buichi Saito, veteran director of countless yakuza and action films at Nikkatsu Studios in the sixties, helms this outing with as painterly, as color-conscious an eye as Kenji Misumi. Of particular visual note: the opening sequence where the topless tattooed swordswoman dispatches several shocked samurai in the forest; an attack on Ogami in-and-outside a temple in brightly colored autumnal woods; and the final battle where Ogami seems mortally wounded a number of times, but manages - bleeding profusely and barely able to stand - to stumble away with the baby cart after it's all over.

According to general Japanese film reference book, *Cinema Club 94*, all the *Lone Wolf* films appear in slightly shorter versions on video. However where other entries are shown of only seven or eight minutes apiece, this particular episode seems to have been knocked down 23 minutes. I don't know the reason for this editing, or if it's Toho or



Zatoichi & The Fugitives, 18th in the series.

Katsu Productions who are responsible. I do know that these are the only versions now available. Knowing the Japanese film industry's proclivity for gore and excessive violence, and seeing the carnage that still survives intact in these films, it's difficult to understand the rationale for any trimming.

In the fifth film, *Path Between Heaven And Hell*, Ogami encounters numerous killers, each in the guise of potential employers. As they die under Ogami's blade, they each relate their short message - part of a story of a daimyo without a male heir, who's registered his daughter as a son and raised her as a boy. There's a document acknowledging all this that's been signed by the daimyo's allies, one of whom is a supposedly benevolent, but in reality evil Buddhist lama. The lama intends to hand the document over to Lord Yagyu, thus ending the daimyo's reign and destroying their clan. Ogami is hired to kill the Buddhist leader, retrieve the document and bring it to the clan's castle. Ogami achieves all this aided by a female assassin (Michiyo Yasuda) member of the clan. Once Ogami has the document in his possession, he insists on delivering it personally. Then in the presence of the daimyo and the dressed-up female heir, Ogami expresses his outrage "as a parent at

the sexual travesty being perpetrated" and explains to the daimyo that though he's fought on his side against Lord Yagyu, he cannot allow this subterfuge to continue. Ogami singlehandedly destroys the entire clan regiment then decapitates the daimyo, the wife and daughter.

One of the most chilling moments had Daigoro and the little girl/fake male heir making funny faces at each other, oblivious to the ridiculous insanity indulged in by their parents; however once Ogami has asserted his murderous intentions the little girl suddenly pipes up with the orders: "Kill them!!!" Director Misumi unfurls one of the most savage indictments of feudal mentality.

The sixth film in the series is *Daigoro! We're Going To Hell!* After his only daughter is dispatched by Ogami, Yagyu desperately implores his other disowned son for help. The son is a crazy bastard progeny who excels as sorcerer in the black magic arts of ninja. Director Kuroda draws on his special-effects background on such in period films as the *Giant Majin* trilogy and *Big Ghost War* to create a haunting atmosphere of occult menace. Ogami and Daigoro face Yagyu and his minions in a climactic battle on snow-covered slopes. This was the sixth and final installment of the film series.

Although the TV series featuring Kinnosuke Yorozya wasn't bad, the dubbed adaptation-into-movie, *Fugitive Samurai* was decidedly inferior. At least 27 episodes in approx. 9 volumes are available on Japanese video.

A 1992 film version from Shichiku Films, *Lone Wolf And Child - A Handful Of Sand* (*Kozure Okami - Sono Chiizaki Tenio*), starred Masakazu Tamura as Ogami and Tatsuya Nakadai as Lord Yagyu. Directed by Akira Inoue (veteran of numerous samurai epics for Daiei Films), it's quite good except for two glaring faults that nearly ruin it: (1) a music score that takes a nice melody and runs it into the ground, repeating it so often a degree of sentimentality is introduced that's nausea-inducing. (2) The decision to do away with the baby cart - the most famous aspect of the *Lone Wolf* story! Daigoro tramps around on foot or is held in daddy Itto's arms. Oh well.

2. THE ZATOICHI SERIES

Although there are numerous assorted injustices and near-tragedies in the pathetic history of Japanese genre films distribution in America, one of the most astounding is the near-anonymity of Japanese superstar, Shintaro Katsu. Katsu is one of those actors in company as disparate as Charlie Chaplin, James Dean, Robert Mitchum, Marilyn Monroe, Orson Welles, and others. In the character of Zatoichi - the wandering, blind masseur/gambler/master swordsman - Katsu, in collaboration with writer Kan Shimozawa, gave birth to a cinematic character as original as Chaplin's "Little Tramp" or Eastwood's "Man With No Name". (Eastwood's character itself coincidentally based on a samurai film persona, the *Yojimbo* (or *Bodyguard*) named Sanjuro, created by actor Toshiro Mifune and director Akira Kurosawa).

Mischievous rascal, Ichi, first appeared in 1962 in the black-and-white Daiei film production *The Life And Opinion Of Masseur Ichi* (*Zatoichi Monogatari*) directed by Kenji Misumi. Numerous Japanese films from 1950-1975 period were turned into movie series if ticket sales warranted, and *Zatoichi* proved to be no exception. Astonishingly enough, when you consider that Katsu as well as the *Zatoichi* character are virtually unknown in the U. S. (except Hawaii where television still airs the subtitled films and reruns of the TV shows), the

(continued)

Zatoichi films were the most popular moneymakers in domestic Japan during the sixties. They, in fact, surpassed the much-more-familiar-to-Americans *Godzilla* movies. Shochiku Films' bittersweet *Tora-San* comedy series (aka *It's Hard To Be A Man*) about a wandering tekiya (traveling salesman) finally usurped the honor of most lucrative, longest running film series in the eighties.

Zatoichi proved popular not only because of the spectacular swordsmanship coming from an unexpected quarter but also the philosophical wisecracks popping out of the mouth of our smart-aleck hero. This tightrope act of humor, drama and exhilaratingly choreographed violence kept the series in favor for over a decade.

Ichi roamed the backroads of Japan in the 1860s, a decade which saw the 400 year feudal rule of the Tokugawa shogunate finally start to crumble. This was an era of dramatic change where the idea of a caste system was being challenged, where starving farmers were finally revolting against centuries of brutally unfair taxes and oppression.

Ichi is a mass of contradictions – a yakuza gambler, he is scrupulously on the up-and-up with honest, common people but proves a ruthless conman trickster with anyone attempting to deceive or cheat him. An expert masseur and acupuncturist, he's also the most skilled swordsman in Japan. Despite being at the bottom of the ladder as a blind masseur in a still-in-place caste system, Ichi has opportunities to make good, settle down and even marry. But, either because of his own choice or the stormy weather of circumstance, his fate is to wander.

Following are descriptions of my favorite Zatoichi films. After the descriptions is a list of the remaining films with a four-star rating system to show my level of enjoyment:

1. *Life And Opinion Of Masseur Ichi (Zatoichi Monogatari)* 1962 96 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/ Shintaro Katsu, Shigeru Amachi, Masayo Banri. In this initial outing, Ichi cons his way into staying at a rural uakuza clan's HQ. The two-faced boss who knows Ichi's reputation, lays it on thick with hospitality, hoping Ichi will fight on their side in an upcoming battle against a clan from a nearby village. While fishing, Ichi meets a lonely, honorable and slowly dying tubercular samurai (Amachi) who turns out to be the rival clan's hired killer. The two become friends, and it's only through a series of accidents and gang manipulations that the two do, indeed, end up crossing swords. Ichi initially believes he'll be taking unfair advantage because of Amachi's health and refuses. Amachi, dreading a quiet death in bed, convinces Ichi he'd rather die on his feet with his sword in his hand. Ichi reluctantly acquiesces to the man's dying request. XXXX VHS/LASER(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer U. S. subtitled VHS, Chambara Entertainment (Formerly known as Video Action).

2. *Return Of Masseur Ichi (Zoku Zatoichi Monogatari)* 1962 72 Min. Dir. Kazuo Mori w/ Shintaro Katsu, Tomisaburo Wakayama (under pka Kenzaburo Joh), Yoshie Mizutani, Masayo Banri. Ichi runs into his estranged one-armed brother (played by real-life bro, Wakayama) the person responsible for stealing Ochiyo, the love of his life. They become reconciled before the end, Wakayama dies in Ichi's arms and Ichi leaves his hiding place to avenge his brother's death. XXXX VHS/Laser (Japan) Daiei/Pioneer. American subtitled VHS from Chambara Entertainment.

4. *Zatoichi, Fugitive (Zatoichi Kyōtōtabi)* 1963 86 min. Dir. Tokuzo Tanaka w/ Shintaro Katsu, Miwa Takada, Masayo Banri, Junichiro Narita. Ichi's platonic friendship with two sisters brings down the wrath of another rural yakuza clan. Beautiful opening with Ichi walking down the dirt road on

a hellish summer day with my favorite Akira Ifukube score playing underneath. Also has a very funny scene where Ichi tries his hand at sumo wrestling. XXXX VHS/LASER(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer.

12. *Zatoichi And The Chess Expert (Zatoichi Jigoku Tabi aka Zatoichi's Trip To Hell)* 1965 87 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/ Shintaro Katsu Mikio Narita, Chizu Hayashi. Ichi becomes friends and chess-playing partner with lone wolf samurai (Narita) who turns out to be a psycho. XXX VHS/LASER(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer American subtitled VHS from Chambara Entertainment.

14. *Zatoichi's Pilgrimage (Zatoichi Umio Wataru)* 1966 82 Min. Dir. Kazuo Ikehiko w/ Shintaro Katsu, Michio Yasuda. Ichi attempts to make a pilgrimage to a temple for each man he's killed (87 or so), but is waylaid by an attacker on the road. After slaying the man, Ichi becomes involved with the deceased's sister and the mountain bandit clan to which the fellow belonged. Atmospheric and evocative of the intoxicating beauty of rural Japan. XXXX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

16. *Zatoichi's Rescue (Zatoichi Ro Yaburi aka The Breakout)* 1967 95 min. Dir. Satsuo Yamamoto w/ Shintaro Katsu, Rentaro Mikuni, Yuko Hamada, Ko Nishimura. Ichi ends up misjudging a yakuza boss, believing him upstanding. As soon as Ichi's left town, the boss takes over as village constable and persecutes the farmers mercilessly. Ichi returns after hearing of the village's misery from a girl who's been sold into prostitution. He ends up rescuing the idealistic swordless samurai who'd been organizing the farmers and sentenced to death by the boss and corrupt local lord. First film by Katsu's own production company. XXX VHS(Japan) Toho

20. *Zatoichi Meets Yojimbo (Zatoichi To Yojimbo)* 1970 116 Min. Dir. Kihachi Okamoto w/ Shintaro Katsu, Toshiro Mifune, Ayako Wakao, Kanjuro Arashi. Title says it all with Ichi and Sanjuro (Mifune) alternately teaming up, fighting, teaming up again in midst of internecine warfare among merchant father and his errant, greedy sons; one, a yakuza boss, the other an employee of the Edo gold mint who's been embezzling the yellow stuff. XXXX VHS(Japan) Toho. American subtitled VHS from Video Action (out-of-print but still available in some of the more complete foreign sections of indie video shops.)

21. *Zatoichi's Fire Festival (Zatoichi Abare Himatsuri)* 1970 95 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/ Shintaro Katsu, Tatsuya Nakadai, Masayuki Mori, Reiko Ohara, Ko Nishimura. One of my top three favorite Zatoichi pix with much action, humor pathos, and Misumi's visual poetry. Plus Mori plays a contemptible blind yakuza boss who devises one of the most sadistic death traps Ichi's ever had to wrangle out of. A Katsu production originally released by Daiei, but Toho/Katsu owns the rights. XXXX VHS(Japan) Toho

22. *Zatoichi Meets His Equal (Shin Zatoichi Yabure! Tojin Ken! aka Zatoichi Break! Chinese Sword!)* 1971 95 Min. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/ Shintaro Katsu, (Jimmy) Wang Yu. The actor Jimmy Wang Yu, aka simply Wang Yu, had his own much shorter-lived series in Hong Kong about a peculiar swordsman; his handicap? One arm. He also starred in a one-armed Kung Fu fighter series. I've heard slightly differing stories about this, but most agree, despite being executive-produced by Katsu and released by Daiei, that it was a Japanese/Hong Kong co-production. It seems to be the only one of the series, for whatever reason, to have never been released on video. Which is unfortunate – despite only seeing a chopped-up Japanese TV print, this is unquestionably one of the most spectacular, entertaining entries. But Katsu, or somebody, is sitting on the rights.

26. *Zatoichi* 1989 124 Min. / (produced and di-

rected by Shintaro Katsu w/ Shintaro Katsu, Ken Ogata, Yomiko Higuchi. The most spectacular, most poignant and poetic of the whole blind swordsman series. Katsu's masterpiece. Much better, in my humble opinion, than the last couple of Kurosawa period/samurai films and deserves to have been released in theatres here. All this with Katsu an extremely spry 57 years old XXXX VHS(Japan) Shochiku.

OTHER ZATOICHI FILMS:

3. *Masseur Ichi Enters Again (Shin Zatoichi Monogatari)* 1963 91 Min. Dir. Tokuzo Tanaka w/ Shintaro Katsu, Seizaburo Kawazu (First entry in color). XXX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

5. *Zatoichi On The Road (Zatoichi Kenka Tabi aka Zatoichi's Violent Journey aka Zatoichi And The Scoundrels)* 1963 87 Min. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/ Shintaro Katsu, Shio Fujimura XXX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer American subtitled VHS from Chambara Ent.

6. *Zatoichi And The Chest Of Gold (Zatoichi Senryo Kubi)* 1964 82 Min. Dir. Kazuo Ikehiko w/ Shintaro Katsu, Tomisaburo Wakayama (pka Kenzaburo Joh), Mikiko Tsubichi, Michiko Hasegawa XXX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer American subtitled VHS from Chambara Entertainment.

7. *Zatoichi's Flashing Sword (Zatoichi Abaredako)* 1964 82 min. Dir. Kazuo Ikehiko w/ Shintaro Katsu, Naoko Kubo, Ryutaro Gomi, Mayumi Nagisa XXX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer American subtitled VHS from Chambara Ent.

8. *Fight, Zatoichi, Fight (Zatoichi Kessho Tabi aka Zatoichi's Bloody Journey)* 1964 87 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/ Shintaro Katsu, Nobuo Kaneko XXX VHS Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

9. *Adventures Of A Blind Man (Zatoichi Sekisho Yaburi)* 1964 86 Min. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/ Shintaro Katsu, Miwa Takada, Mikijiro Hira, Eiko Taki XX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

10. *Zatoichi's Revenge (Zatoichi Nidan Giri aka Zatoichi's Double-Cut Style)* 1965 83 Min. Dir. Akira Inoue w/ Shintaro Katsu XX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

11. *Zatoichi And The Doomed Man (Zatoichi Sakate Giri)* 1965 77 Min.. Dir. Kazuo Mori w/ Shintaro Katsu, Eiko Taki Kenjiro Ishiyama, Mijojo Masaka XX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

13. *Blind Swordsman's Vengeance (Zatoichi No Uta Ga Kikoeru aka Zatoichi's Song Of Vengeance)* 1966 83 Min. Dir. Tokuzo Tanaka w/ Shintaro Katsu, Shigeru Amachi, Kei Sato, Mayumi Ogawa XXX VHS/Laser (Japan) Daiei/Pioneer. American subtitled VHS, CHAMBARA ENTERTAINMENT.

15. *Zatoichi's Cane Sword (Zatoichi Tekka Tabi)* 1967 93 Min.. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/ Shintaro Katsu, Eijiro Tono, Shio Fujimura, Makoto Fujita, Tatsuo Endo XX VHS/Laser (Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

17. *Zatoichi Challenged (Zatoichi Chi Kemuri Kaido aka Zatoichi's Bloody Path)* 1967 86 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/ Shintaro Katsu, Asao Koike, Junshiro Konoe, Miwa Takada, Mikiko Tsubichi XXX VHS/Laser(Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

18. *Zatoichi And The Fugitives (Zatoichi Hatashijo)* 1968 82 Min.. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/ Shintaro Katsu, Kyosuke Machida, Takashi Shimura, Kayo Mikimoto, Yumiko Nogawa XXX VHS/Laser (Japan) American subtitled VHS, Chambara Entertainment.

19. *Blind Swordsman Samaritan (Zatoichi Kenka Daiko, aka Zatoichi & The Battle Drum)* 1968, 82 min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/ Shintaro Katsu, Makoto Sato, Yoshiko Mita, Ko Nishimura, Takoya Fujioka VHS/Laser (Japan) Daiei/Pioneer, U. S. subtitled VHS from Chambara Entertainment

23. *Zatoichi At Large (Zatoichi Goyotabi aka Zatoichi's Journey Of Obligation aka Zatoichi's Official Journey)* 1972, 90 min. Dir. Kazuo Mori w/

Shintaro Katsu, Rentaro Mikuni, Hisaya Morishige, Etsushi Takahashi VHS (Japan) Toho

24. *Zatoichi In Desperation (Shin Zatoichi Monogatari - Oreta Tsue aka New Zatoichi Story - Broken Cane)* 1972 92 min. Dir. Shintaro Katsu w/ Shintaro Katsu, Kiwako Taichi, Kyoko Yoshizawa, Katsuo Nakamura VHS(Japan) Toho

25. *Zatoichi's Conspiracy (Shin Zatoichi Monogatari - Kasama No Chimatsuri aka New Zatoichi Story - Bloodbath At Kasama)* 1973, 88 min. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/Shintaro Katsu, Kei Sato VHS (Japan) Toho.

After #25, Katsu took the series to television for a very successful run. Although the TV episodes were shot on shoestring budgets, the writing, acting and directing quality remained high due to Katsu's control. In some respects, the series actually improved since stories were produced that would've proved too small in scope, too introspective in tone for the big screen. Ichi, though, still managed to draw his sword for at least one major fight even in the more human-interest tales. The subtitled TV episodes, of which there are over 100, are still occasionally syndicated on Hawaiian TV.

FILMS BY HIDEO GOSHA

It's difficult to find an exact way of describing Gosha's style and his individual films without straying into a region of cliché. I hate to, when stumped, be reduced to comparisons with American counterparts. But since we're limited by matters of space, and, since the comparisons are not meant in a demeaning way but rather a complimentary one, probably the best way of getting a handle on his bravura visual style and excellence of narrative, is to imagine the foremost qualities of Anthony Mann (who directed the best of James Stewart's 1950s westerns and later *El Cid* and *Fall Of The Roman Empire*), Ken Russell, Sam Peckinpah and Robert Aldrich all rolled into one ball of Japanese cinematic self-expression.

In some respects the Mann comparison may be the most apt. Mann's and Gosha's no-nonsense style of violent, un-flinching confrontation, rugged adventure with often perversely sadistic and/or sexual emotional underpinnings, their willingness to instill their "heroes" with undesirable traits are actually very similar (though Gosha, due to the time he was working, was able to go much further with the sex and violence).

Before 1980, Gosha operated almost exclusively in the samurai genre. Two exceptions were *The Wolves (Shussho Iwai)* which actually translates as *Prison Release Celebration* in 1971, a stunningly personal but still epic saga of the 1920s yakuza (Japanese mafia) and arguably his finest film; and *Violent Street (Boryoku Gai)* in 1974, an excellent low-budget, extremely violent and perverse yakuza picture.

Tenchu and *Goyokin* (both 1969) and *Hunter In The Dark* (1979) are his best Samurai pictures.

Tenchu (Heaven's Punishment aka Hitokiri) 1969 140 Min.. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Shintaro Katsu, Tatsuya Nakadai, Yujiro Ishihara, Yuko Mishima.

Tenchu tells the story of Izo (Katsu), a ruffian of unnerving proficiency with a sword and a ruthless killer, who, because of his average intelligence, naive trust and desperate financial situation, is exploited by one clan's cold-blooded petty official, Takechi (Nakadai), in his climb up the political ladder. Through *Tenchu's* spectacular catalogue of swordfights, assassinations and executions, Izo struggles within himself to achieve a peace of mind that is impossible as long as he unquestioningly kills for a master who regards him as nothing more than a dog. It leads him to frame one of his best friends (played by famous writer, Yukio Mishima) for a killing he, Izo, com-

mitted. Which in turn causes Mishima to commit hara-kiri (in an eerie, realistic scene that pre-echoes Mishima's own real-life hara-kiri a year later in 1970!!!) When Izo is finally thrown aside by Takechi, he falls into the depths of a heart-rending personality crisis that climaxes with his dear death from drinking poisoned wine. Knowing he's free at last, he adopts another name, Torazo - meaning "Tiger" - and turns Takechi in to clan officials even though it will mean his own crucifixion. Originally produced by Katsu Productions and Fuji Television, released by Daiei XXXX VHS/Laser (Japan) Pony Canyon.

Goyokin (Official Gold) 1969 124 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Tatsuya Nakadai, Tetsuro Tamba, Kinnosuke Nakamura, Ruriko Asaoka, Ko Nishimura, Isao Natsuyagi.

Goyokin tells the story of Magobei (Nakadai), a swordsman reduced to performing in village fairs and carnivals after leaving his clan. He'd witnessed the slaughter of an entire village of peasants by his clan led by his brother-in-law (Tetsuro Tamba). The villagers had taken gold from a shipwreck and the clan, on the verge of breaking-up due to bankruptcy, had seized the gold (originally destined for the Shogunate) for themselves. Magobei had been shocked and saddened, suddenly confronted with the true nature of his samurai fellows, and had left to wander. Magobei ends up returning to expose the clan, who are now purposely wrecking ships on a desolate winter shore to steal the gold. Along the way he saves the life of a woman (Ruriko Asaoka) who'd witnessed the initial massacre and is befriended by a government spy (Kinnosuke Nakamura). Before the film ends, he's survived numerous attempts on his life, and, with Nakamura's help, sabotages the clan's last attempt at shipwrecking. Finally, as the dawn comes, Nakadai and Tamba fight an amazingly choreographed duel-to-the-death in a snow-covered forest. XXXX Not out on tape either in Japan or the U.S. But I have seen a dub of a letterboxed VHS release with French subtitles, so apparently the French are up on us all.

Hunter In The Dark (Yami No Kariudo) 1979 137 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Tatsuya Nakadai, Yoshio Harada, Shinichi "Sonny" Chiba, Keiko Kishi, Kashi Matsuo, Tatsuo Umeki, Tetsuro Tamba, Ayumi Ishida.

Hunter In The Dark is a period yakuza story set in 1784 Edo (Tokyo). A chivalrous, ethical - though by no means saintly - yakuza boss (Nakadai) tries to help save the life of his loyal, amnesiac, one-eyed bodyguard (Harada). Harada, a high-born samurai is being victimized by Edo's head of secret police (Chiba) and prime minister (Tamba) who are trying to steal Ezo, a huge tract of unspoiled land, that represents Harada's title and inheritance. In flashback, we learn that Harada had been blinded in one eye when he'd tried to kill Chiba, but instead ended up accidentally assassinating his own father. Subsequently burned out of his rural hiding-place and tossed over a cliff by Chiba's men, he loses his memory. It turns out his traumatized wife (Ishida) believing him dead, had allowed herself to be taken under Nakadai's wing as his lover. Although a criminal, Nakadai loves the woman so much and values Harada's loyalty (Harada having saved his life) to the point he ends up sacrificing himself and his clan to try to reunite them - all in vain. XXXX VHS(Japan) Shochiku. American subtitled VHS via World Artists

Other Gosha samurai films

Three Outlaw Samurai (Sanbiki No Samurai) 1964 95 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Tetsuro Tamba, Mikijiro Hira, Isamu Nagato XXX VHS(Japan) Shochiku

Sword Of The Beast (Kemono No Ken aka Samurai Gold-Seekers) 1965 90 Min Dir. Hideo Gosha w/ Mikijiro Hira, Go Kato, Shima Iwashita, Kunie

Tanaka, Bin Amatsu XXX VHS(Japan) Shochiku

Secret Of The Urn (Tange Sazen Hien Jai-Giri) 1966 91 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Kinnosuke Nakamura, Tetsuro Tamba, Keiko Awaji XXX VHS(Japan) Toei

Samurai Wolf (Kiba Okaminosuke) 1966 75 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Isao Natsuyagi, Ryohei Uchida, Junko Miyazono Released by Toei Pictures (No tape)

Samurai Wolf - Hell Cut (Kiba Okaminosuke Jigoku Giri) 1967, 72 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Isao Natsuyagi, Ko Nishimura, Released by Toei Pictures (No tape).

Bandit vs. Samurai Squad (Kumokiri Nazaemon) 1966 106 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Shima Iwashita XXX VHS (Japan) Shochiku

Death Shadows (Jittemai) 1985 116 Min. Dir. Hideo Gosha w/Mariko Ishihara, Takuzo Kawatani, Mari Natsuki, Tsunehiko Watase XXX VHS(Japan) Shochiku, American dubbed version (the dubbing is atrocious) via J. A Video Productions.

Some other non-samurai Gosha films:

The Wolves (Shussho Iwai) 1971, 131 Min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Noboru Ando, Kyoko Enami, Isao Natsuyagi, Tetsuro Tamba, Toshio Kurosawa XXXX VHS(Japan), Toho. American subtitled VHS/Laser via World Artists.

Violent Street (Boryoku Gai) 1974, 96 Min. w/ Noboru Ando, Isao Natsuyagi, Akira Kobayashi, Bunta Sugawara, Tetsuro Tamba, XXXX VHS(Japan) Toei

Kiryuin Hana Ko No Shogai 1982, 146 Min. w/ Tatsuya Nakadai, Shima Iwashita, Tetsuro Tamba, Ryohei Uchida XXX VHS(Japan) Toei

Fireflies Of The North (Kita No Hotaru) 1984, 125 Min. w/Tatsuya Nakadai, Shima Iwashita, Isao Natsuyagi, Mari Natsuki, Mikio Narita, Tetsuro Tamba XXX VHS Toei

Kagero (Spider Web) 1991 106 Min w/Tatsuya Nakadai, Yomiko Higuchi with cameos by Tetsuro Tamba and Shima Iwashita XXX Released by Shochiku, and on VHS(Japan) by Bandai.

There are several more films directed by Gosha between 1980 and now, but space prohibits any further digressions. Gosha died in 1992.

FILMS BY KENJI MISUMI

I feel that Kenji Misumi is, visually, one of the most impressive directors of the last forty years - not just from Japan but on an international scale. Since he died abruptly in 1975 from a heart attack - he was only 54 years old - he hasn't received the critical attention I feel he deserves. Although not of the poisonously satirical persuasion of Seijun Suzuki (a director infamous for his bizarre, surreally violent action and yakuza films - he never directed any samurai films or he would be included here) or the over-the-top dramaturgy of Hideo Gosha, he still rates a place beside these other two masters in the pantheon of unrecognized geniuses of world cinema. The lion's share of his films are incredibly beautiful, with an intoxicating sense of color and a sparsely economic style of shot composition strikingly unique to Misumi. Most of his films are instantly recognizable from Misumi's uncluttered presentation of images and pared-to-the-quick mise-en-scene. Undoubtedly some part of this style was born out of the factory-like, assembly-line production methods of Daiei, the studio where he directed roughly 80% of his output.

At this point I should probably digress and explain that all six studios (Toho, Daiei, Nikkatsu, Shochiku, Toei, Shintoho) all churned out a staggering quantity of films at an exhaustive pace, all the time managing to achieve a high degree of quality in production values. Unlike the U.S. where the studios' chains of theatres were legally sev-

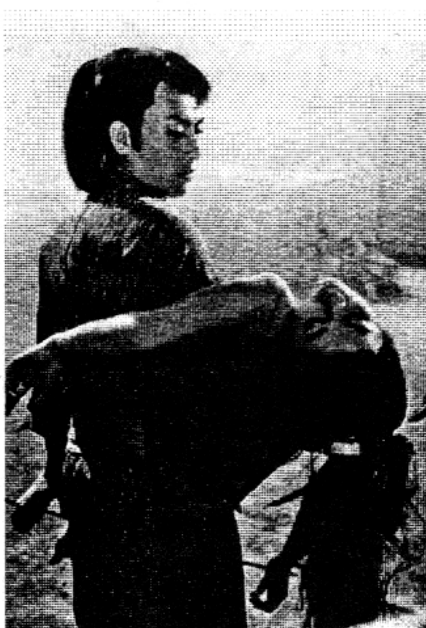
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ered from any affiliation with the parent studios in the 1940s in a devastating (to the studios) anti-trust lawsuit, Japanese studios maintained and still operate their own theatres. Thus they had a guaranteed venue for their product – generally double features which changed twice a week. However, even this cozy arrangement couldn't forestall the moviegoing public's retreat to the living room as Japanese television became firmly entrenched during the 1960s. Audience attendance went from a mind-blowing 1,127,000,000 a year in 1958 to 511,000,000 in 1963 to 253,000,000 in 1970 and finally bottomed out, stabilizing at 170,000,000 in 1975 (These figures are from David Desser's study on Japanese avant garde films, *Eros Plus Massacre*, published in 1988). Shintoho went bankrupt in the early sixties, Daiei was the next to follow in 1971, though they resurfaced in the eighties releasing prodigious amounts of their past classics on video. Nikkatsu also underwent major financial hardship in the early seventies. 1971 for them, too, was the last year that saw production of a varying array of films (mostly yakuza, action and "pink", or softcore sex, films). Nikkatsu survived by virtually devoting themselves to the "pink" film in the seventies. Toho, Toei, and Shochiku still produce films today but, as is the case in the rest of the world, at a fraction of their past output. All three, especially Toho, are somewhat stingy in their attention to releasing past classics (of whatever genre) on video. Toho also seems the most oblivious to the huge number of classics – particularly samurai movies – in their possession.

Misumi, much akin to Seijun Suzuki at Nikkatsu and Terence Fisher at Hammer Studios in the U. K. squeezed the maximum from the dollar (or yen) to achieve a singularity of vision. Limitation of budget and time restrictions are rarely evident. One of Misumi's most personal characteristics is his use of space, how he fills it up, or rather doesn't fill it up, to create atmosphere and attention to detail within the frame. The whole first five minutes of *Sword Devil* (*Ken Ki*), Shio Fujimura's execution in *Destiny's Son*, or the shallow waterfall scene where Wakayama dispatches Fumio Watanabe in *Lone Wolf And Child – Sword Of Vengeance* are perfect examples. In the latter scene, Misumi also uses the sound of flesh-ripped-by-swords, then Wakayama's harangue of Lord Yagyu on the bridge with the noise of rushing water – which would in real life be the loudest sound – conspicuously absent, to manipulate reality and audience perception. He achieves this all throughout *Sword Of Vengeance* and to an only slightly lesser extent in the other three Lone Wolf films he directs, much the same effect as the original comic strip. In other words reality is sculpted by letting us see and hear only certain specific things.

Misumi's best samurai films:

Destiny's Son (*Kiru*) 1962, 71 Min. w/Raizo Ichikawa, Masayo Banri, Shio Fujimura, Shigeru Amachi, Junichiro Narity. Screenplay by Kaneto Shindo (*Oni-Baba*, *Kuroneko*) Fujimura, a lady-in-waiting, kills her mistress and escapes. She goes to live in a forest cabin with her lover, a samurai (Amachi) from the same household and gives birth to their son. Finally caught, Amachi is given the task of beheading his own wife. The son is adopted by another of the clan's retainers and grows up to be Ichikawa. However, Ichikawa doesn't know his illegitimate status until it's revealed to him by another jealous clan retainer. Circumstances lead the envious retainer to kill his foster father and fiancée. Ichikawa leaves the castle to find the retainer and retainer's son who've fled. In one of the most evocative scenes, Ichikawa catches up to them in a burnt out, surreally skeletal forest and slays them. He then goes to find his mother's grave. The grave is on the grounds of a



Destiny's Son, directed by Kenji Misumi.

temple which is tended by a Buddhist priest who ends up being his father. Amachi had given up the sword after having to execute the love-of-his-life, then had turned his own existence over to spiritual matters. Ichikawa briefly wanders, and eventually settles in to serve as samurai to a peaceful lord. At the end of the film he uses a cherry branch as symbolic sword when his lord's household is attacked. Managing to survive he commits harakiri over the corpse of his slain master. XXXX VHS/Laser Daiei/Pioneer

Sword Devil (*Ken Ki*) 1965, 83 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi from a story by Renzaburo Shibata. w/Raizo Ichikawa, Kei Sato, Ryuji Shimada, Rokko Toura. One of the most original samurai films I've seen. The opening sequence where a noblewoman dies in childbirth, watched over by a howling dog while her ladies-in-waiting gossip about her death and the child, is one of the most haunting sequences in Japanese cinema. The child is given to a commoner to raise, and the baby once again grows up to be Ichikawa. As a young fellow we're led to wonder if perhaps he, indeed, is cursed. He has several unnatural/supernatural animal-like abilities that make him an outcast. He's an incredibly talented horticulturist given the job of head gardener at the local castle. His green thumb producing rows and rows of flowers is uncanny. He can also run as fast as a horse and gets to exercise this talent when his lord (Rokko Toura), a paranoid schizophrenic swiftly descending into incoherent madness, takes his horse on frantic, crazy rides that endanger his person. Gradually Ichikawa's strange abilities, as well as his inherent outcast/bastard status, raise the ire of the venal young samurais in the lord's employ. One of the lord's retainers played by Kei Sato, seeing that Ichikawa has secretly learned swordsmanship and brought his "savant" proficiency to bear in this area too, takes advantage of Ichikawa's naivete and desire to serve, by using him as an assassin. A brilliant, beautiful film. XXXX VHS/Laser, Daiei/Pioneer.

Daibosatsu Pass (*Daibosatsu Toge* or *The Great Bodhisatva Pass* aka *Satan's Sword*) Part One (1960, 105 Min.) and Two (1960 90 Min.) Dir. Kenji Misumi, Part Three (1961, 98 Min.) Dir. Kazuo Mori w/Raizo Ichikawa, Kojiro Hongo, Tamao Nakamura. This story has been filmed numerous times: in 1935 by Hiroshi Inagaki; in a 3-part version in 1953 by Kunio Watanabe; a 3-part ver-

sion in 1957-1959 by Tomu Uchida (Director of Toei's five part series on Musashi Miyamoto w/Kinnosuke Nakamura); this 3-part version by Misumi and Mori for Daiei Studios; and part one only in 1966 by Kihachi Okamoto w/Tatsuya Nakadai called (in America) *Sword Of Doom* (see next issue's Part Two of this article). The story concerns Ryunosuke Tsukue (Ichikawa), a sociopathic samurai without conscience. The opening sequence has Ryunosuke test his blade on an aged pilgrim, killing him. He then wanders off. The old man's granddaughter returns from getting water at a spring to find his still form. A passing traveler takes the girl under his wing. In Part Two Ryunosuke, now a wandering outcast, is exploited by a political extremist group for his sword prowess. He's blinded in an explosion and is still pursued by the brother (Kojiro Hongo) of a man he'd killed in a wooden sword match (early in Part One). Hongo finally manages to catch up to Ichikawa at the conclusion of Part Three in the midst of a savage rainstorm which is causing massive floods. He sees Ichikawa literally battling the invisible ghosts of people he has killed while the house collapses around them. Realizing his revenge would be meaningless on such a pathetic figure, Hongo jumps to safety as the house is carried away by the overflowing river. The last shot is of Ichikawa standing on the roof of the floating house, still swinging his sword XXXX VHS/Laser, Daiei/Pioneer.

The Devil's Temple (*Oni No Sumu Yakata*) 1969, 76 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi, Screenplay by Kaneto Shindo w/Shintaro Katsu, Michiyo Aratama, Kei Sato. Bizarre, extremely atmospheric tale about an itinerant swordsman (Katsu) and two women, one psychotic and evil, the other serene and good, who take up residence in a defiled Buddhist temple in the forest. The psycho woman (Aratama) eggs Katsu on to kill people as well as seduces traveling priest, Sato. Katsu finally has the spell of this "witch" broken when the priest dies. Katsu slays Aratama. His conscience and spirituality awakened, he takes the dead priest's place. XXXX VHS from Daiei

Other Misumi Samurai films:

Yotsuya Ghost Story (*Yotsuya Kaidan*) 1959, 84 Min. w/Kazuo Hasegawa. VHS, Daiei

Lone Wolf And Child (*Kozure Okami*) see above section on *Lone Wolf* film series

Sword (*Ken*) 1964, 94 Min. from a story by Yukio Mishima w/Raizo Ichikawa. Modern story of overly perfectionist kendo instructor and his death from shame. XXX VHS/Laser Daiei/Pioneer

Lone Wanderer (*Mushoku Mono*) 1966, 88 Min.. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Raizo Ichikawa Daiei Films (no tape).

Hanzo The Blade aka *Sword Of Justice* (*Goyo Kiba* which literally translates as *Fangs Of Public Office*) 1972, 90 Min. (Orig. Release, 108 Min.) w/Shintaro Katsu (#1 in series) XXX VHS, Toho (See section on Hanzo in Part Two of article in next issue).

The Last Samurai (*Okami Yoraku Jitsuo Kire*) 1974, 159 Min. w/Hideki Takahashi, Ken Ogata, Misumi's last film. Shochiku Films (No tape).

♦♦♦♦

Kyoshiro Nemuri Series

Kyoshiro Nemuri is one of the most nihilistic heroes (anti heroes?) to ever emerge from world literature, let alone Japanese literature. Originally appearing in short stories and novels by Renzaburo Shibata in the fifties, Nemuri was the Eurasian half-breed offspring of a Japanese lady-in-waiting raped by a defrocked Portuguese missionary while performing a Black Mass. This traumatic conception caused his mother's suicide. It also provides fodder for many surreal flashbacks in various excellent installments of this violent and frequently

macabre samurai film series that started in 1963. The series would've undoubtedly lasted several more films were it not for the death of extremely popular star, Raizo Ichikawa, from colon cancer in July 1969. Twelve Nemuri films were produced with Ichikawa. Daiei Films, the production company, immediately tried to revive the series with two more films starring the rising, talented but somewhat miscast Hiroki Matsukata. Ichikawa's posthumous popularity as well as Daiei's bankruptcy kept Matsukata from doing any more pictures as Nemuri.

Following are descriptions of what I feel are the five best Nemuri films:

#4 *Kyoshiro Nemuri At Bay (Nemuri Kyoshiro Joyo Ken aka Kyoshiro Nemuri - Seductive Sword)* 1964, 81 Min. Dir. Kazuo Ikehiro w/Raizo Ichikawa, Shio Fujimura, Naoko Kubo. Nemuri (Ichikawa) comes up against a disfigured, opium-addicted princess whose court retainers try to hush up the fact she not only gets her thrills from seeing Christian subjects crucified but also from murdering her own handmaidens. After many plot convolutions, Nemuri kills her before she can betray any more Christians. XXX VHS/Laser, Daiei/Pioneer

#5 *Flaming Sword Of Kyoshiro Nemuri (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Enjo Ken)* 1965, 83 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Raizo Ichikawa, Tamao Nakamura, Ko Nishimura, Toru Abe, Ryuji Shimada. Nemuri saves the life of a scheming woman (Nakamura) at the beginning of the story, and, in the last scene on the same road and at the same time of the day - after being betrayed and attacked repeatedly by her - kills her. In between, Ichikawa gets to engage in some of the most spectacularly choreographed swordplay in the series. XXXX VHS/Laser (Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

#9 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Trail Of Traps (Nemuri Kyoshiro Burai Hikae - Masho No Hada or Kyoshiro Nemuri Refraining From Villainy - Devilish Flesh)* 1967, 88 Min. Dir. Kazuo Ikehiro w/Raizo Ichikawa, Mikio Narita, Nobuo Kaneko, Naoko Kubo. Nemuri ends up accepting the job of defending a young woman transporting a sacred relic/statue of the Virgin Mary. Two separate sets of villains are after the statue; one, an evil merchant who knows the statue is made of solid gold and two, a fanatical Christian cult called the Black Finger Group led by Narita. XXX VHS/Laser Daiei/Pioneer

#11 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Human Tarantula (Nemuri Kyoshiro Hito Hada Gumo or Kyoshiro Nemuri - Spider With Human Flesh)* 1968 80 Min. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/Raizo Ichikawa, Mako Midori, Mako Sario, Yusuke Kawazu, Fumio Watanabe. Nemuri, while visiting his mother's grave in Kofu, becomes involved with a sadistic, incestuous brother and sister duo who've been banished by the Shogun for their psychotic antics and are now holding an entire village hostage in their castle lair. The princess (another gal addicted to killing her handmaidens, this time to quell semi-epileptic fits) falls for Nemuri, and her insanely jealous brother devises all kinds of traps to destroy him. This is probably the most bizarre and perverse of the whole series, and a definite precursor that set the mood for series like *Lone Wolf* and *Hanzo The Blade*. With a riveting, memorable score composed by Chumei Watanabe. XXXX VHS/Laser (Japan), Daiei/Pioneer

#12 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Castle Menagerie (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Aku Jo Gari or Hunting Evil Women)* 1969, 81 Min. Dir. Kazuo Ikehiro w/Raizo Ichikawa, Naoko Kubo, Shio Fujimura, Kashiro Matsuo, Asao Koike. Nemuri becomes entangled with a group of evil women retainers in the shogun's court who are planning to usurp power. In the meantime they devote their spare time to trying to kill each other, lesbian lovemaking, engineering massacres of Christian subjects and attempting to assassi-



Enter Kyoshiro Nemuri, first in the series.

nate Nemuri. This is another film that is extremely violent and bizarre, blending a couple of Nemuri's daydreams/dream sequences with actual reality (attacks on him within the castle by assassins dressed up as demons and giant birds). Beautiful cinematography as usual with an incredible score. Ichikawa died of cancer the same year this and *Gamblers Life - Unstoppable Bloodbath*, a yakuza film, were released.

Other films in the Kyoshiro Nemuri film series:

#1 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Book Of Death (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Sappo Cho aka Enter Kyoshiro Nemuri, Swordsman)* 1963, 82 Min. Dir. Tokuzo Tanaka w/Raizo Ichikawa, Tomisaburo Wakayama (pk Kenzaburo Joh), Tamao Nakamura XXX VHS/Laser (Japan) Daiei/Pioneer

#2 *Adventures Of Kyoshiro Nemuri (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Shobu aka Kyoshiro Nemuri - Showdown)* 1964, 83 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Raizo Ichikawa, Shio Fujimura, Naoko Kubo, Junichiro Narita XXX VHS/Laser Daiei/Pioneer

#3 *Exploits Of Kyoshiro Nemuri (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Engetsu Giri or Kyoshiro Nemuri - Full Circle Cut)* 1964, 85 Min. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda w/Raizo Ichikawa, Ko Tokyo, Junichiro Narita XXX VHS/Laser, Daiei/Pioneer

#6 *Mysterious Sword Of Kyoshiro Nemuri (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Masho Ken or Kyoshiro Nemuri - Devilish Sword)* 1965, 81 Min. Dir. Kimiyoshi Yasuda W/Raizo Ichikawa, Machiko Hasegawa XXX VHS/Laser Daiei/Pioneer

#7 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - The Princess' Mask (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Tajo Ken)* 1966 85 Min. Dir. Akira Inoue

w/Raizo Ichikawa, Ichiro Nakatani, Yoshie Mizutani Follow-up to *Nemuri At Bay* (#4) XXX VHS/Laser Daiei/Pioneer

#8 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Villain Sword (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Burai Ken)* 1966, 79 Min. Dir. Kenji Misumi w/Raizo Ichikawa, Shigeru Amachi, Shio Fujimura XXX VHS? Laser Daiei/Pioneer

#10 *Kyoshiro Nemuri In Woman Hell (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Onna Jigoku aka A Ronin Called Nemuri)* 82 Min. Dir. Tokuzo Tanaka w/Raizo Ichikawa, Yunnosuke Ito, Miwa Takada, Yoshie Mizutani, Toru Abe XXX VHS/Laser, Daiei/Pioneer XXXX VHS/Laser (Japan) Daiei/pioneer

Nemuri Films with Hiroki Matsukata in title role:

#13 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Full Moon Swordsman (Nemuri Kyoshiro - Engetsu Sappo or Kyoshiro Nemuri - Full Circle Killing)* 1969, 82 Min. Dir. Kazuo Mori w/Hiroki Matsukata, Mikio Narita XXX VHS, Daiei

#14 *Kyoshiro Nemuri - Flycot Swordplay (Manji Giri or Kyoshiro Nemuri - Spinning Wheel Killing)* 1969, 88 Min. Dir. Kazuo Ikehiro w/Hiroki Matsukata, Masakazu Tamura XXX VHS, Daiei

There was also a series of three films in the late fifties with Koji Tsuruta as Nemuri

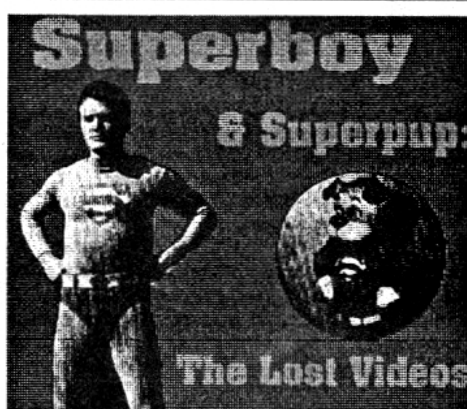
#1 *Kyoshiro Nemuri Refraining From Villainy (Nemuri Kyoshiro Burai Hikae)* 1957 VHS, Toho

#2 *Full Circle Killing (Engetsu Sappo)* 1957 VHS, Toho

#3 *Kyoshiro Nemuri Refraining From Villainy - Devil Sword From Hell (Nemuri Kyoshiro Burai Hikae - Ma Ken Jigoku)* 1958, 91 Min. Toho Films (No tape).

Kyoshiro Nemuri has also been portrayed in several TV movies in the late 1980s and early 1990s by Masakazu Tamura (star of the latest *Lone Wolf And Child* film). Unfortunately the only Nemuri film to be subtitled in English is the latest TV incarnation when it was broadcast on Hawaiian television. It's another travesty that none of the Raizo Ichikawa Nemuri pictures have been licensed for video release here in the United States.

This is the end of Part One of the article, "Samurai Films: A Neglected Genre." I wish to thank Satoko Nakajima and Merlin David for their help in preparing this article. Part Two will appear in the next issue of *Cult Movies* and will be more of an overview with information and comment on the films of directors Akira Kurosawa, Kihachi Okamoto, Masaki Kobayashi, Masahiro Shinoda, Daisuke Ito, Hiroshi Inagaki, as well as the *Ninja*, *Band Of Assassins* film series, the *Hanzo The Blade* film series, director Tomu Uchida's six films with Kinnosuke Nakamura as "Miyamoto Musashi," *Kaidan* (or period ghost story films usually featuring samurai characters), Teruo Ishii's sadistic *Tokugawa* film trilogy, Kaneto Shindo's supernatural samurai films, *Oni-Baba*, *Kuroneko*, and *Matatabi* Films (about roving samurai gamblers). ■



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Queen Of The B's: Conversations With JOAN WOODBURY

Cult Movies Exclusive by Katherine Orrison

"I just want to know," Joan Woodbury demanded in her usual forthright manner, "what in the world *Seventh Seal* was all about?! Who was that—that man on the beach? Why was everybody playing *Ring Around The Rosie* with him at the end? Really, Kathe, it was the dullest, stupidest thing I ever had to sit through."

It was 1985 and Joan, never one to let go of anything, had been perplexed for 25 years as far as Ingmar Bergman was concerned, and no amount of explaining was going to help her.

"The man on the beach is Death," I tried.

"Death isn't a man."

"It's symbolic, like the chess game is symbolic of Life."

"That's another thing, that chess game..."

Life, for Joan, was very definitely black or white, good or bad, and the mysteries of her failed marriage to DeMille actor/producer Henry Wilcoxon was its only ambiguity.

My relationship with Joan began on the evening of ex-husband Henry's death, March 6, 1984.

"Hello, Kathe?" a cultivated actress voice inquired on the other end of the phone. "This is Joan Woodbury, I just called to say 'thank you' for taking such good care of 'Biff' during his illness. I'm sure he loved you very much."

"Not like you," I replied. "You were the love of his life, you know." Joan burst into tears on her end. "He never said it, he never told me so, in all our years together."

Have I said yet that Joan was a remarkable woman? Well, she was...

Joan. Daughter of the first Pasadena Tournament of Rose Parade Queen (1907). Wife of Henry Wilcoxon for 30 years. Queen of the B-movie. Tyrone Power's high-school sweetheart... The girl who taught Errol Flynn how to rumba... the woman who taught Jennifer Jones how to seduce Gregory Peck...

"Listen here," Joan declared one morning. "Take my word for it, Ty was *not* a homosexual. A mama's boy like Elvis Presley maybe, but not homosexual. We dated for years. I ought to know. Don't write about all this in Henry's book, though; I'm writing my own book."

Unfortunately, for film historians and Tyrone Power fans, Joan died of TB in 1989, before she could write her book. I was lucky enough, over a five-year period of time, to spend months with her: going over Henry's autobiography and listening to her life story: Joan was the first and only child of the union of two California pioneer families. Her mother, Joan Hiedenfelt Woodbury, was 43 when Joan was born December 17, 1915 in Pasadena, California. Her father, who could trace his lineage to the founder of Woodbury, New York, was managing the Huntington Hotel at the time. It would be an understatement to say Joan's first personal appearance was a surprise. "We called them 'menopause babies' in my day," Joan informed me. [Or why the Rhythm Method didn't work.]

Totally unprepared for parenthood, Joan's parents divorced when she was very young. And

with absolutely no maternal instincts to her name, the 1907 Rose Parade Queen placed Joan in a San Francisco convent at the age of five before departing for Europe and a stint in opera. There Joan languished till her high-school years and "Mother Woodbury's" return on Joan's sixteenth birthday.

"Had Joanne (Joan's real name) been keeping up on her ballet, violin, and piano lessons?" Oh, yes, the good sisters replied, but she excelled in her drama lessons. Mother Superior was sure Joan was a born actress. "She's *very* dramatic."

Mother Woodbury was now 60. As she intended for Joan to support her in her retirement, "After all, I've supported you all these years," the

only thing to do was enroll Joan at Hollywood High for its dramatics classes [considered a good, serious school in those days] and Nico Charisse's dancing school for movement.

From a girl's convent to Hollywood overnight... Joan, with a spirit barely dampened by eleven years of Catholic isolation and discipline, took to co-education with relish, catching Tyrone Power, Jr.'s eye (the Jr. was dropped with his first film) almost immediately. They both lived on Lanewood (just behind the school) and both burned with an ambition to "make it." Which was lucky, since Power was being groomed to support *his* mother as well—his father (Tyrone Power II) having died of a heart attack on the set of *The Miracle Man* when Ty was only seventeen.

Together Joan and Ty studied, rehearsed, shared sodas at Schwabb's played Ping-Pong at the Garden of Allah and spent summer vacations at Lake Arrowhead, hiking, swimming, and fishing. And getting sunburned.

"One summer," Joan recalled, "Ty and I rowed out on the lake with no hats or suntan lotion and we were burned so badly we couldn't go outside for a week! Mother slathered us in Noxzema, and we lay in hammocks on the cabin porch, taking turns reading *David Copperfield* and *A Tale Of Two Cities* out loud. Ty's mother was an acting teacher who'd coached him since childhood to assume the



'Power Mantel.' His voice was beautiful... in many ways those two weeks of sunburn and Dickens are some of my happiest girlhood memories."

Tyrone Power, with his father's name and reputation and his mother's training, was destined to have doors opened for him. Joan was to have a harder time after graduating from Hollywood High in 1933. "I made straight A's on my exams with one exception: an F in typing. I'd never made an F in my entire life. I was terrified of facing mother. I waited alone at home in the dark for her to return from work. My heart began to pound when I heard the bell on the Downtown-to-Hollywood Red car that deposited mother on the corner. I was in tears by the time she reached the door. 'I've failed you,' I wailed, 'I've failed typing! I'm sorry, I'm sorry, I'm sorry!' 'But Joanne,' my mother said, 'you're going to be a great actress, not a secretary! What does typing matter? Maybe to type answers to your fan mail - but that's all.'"

I decided I'd gotten the wrong mother after hearing Joan tell that story!

Starting first as a photographer's model and taking any and every acting job she could get, 1935 found her as the "Queen in the Bottle" in *Bride of Frankenstein* (no lines, but she looked like her mother in the ermine robe); the lead in a quickie western, *Lion's Den*; and as a dancing girl in *The Count Of Monte Cristo* and *Anthony Adverse* (no lines, but she sure didn't look like her mother in that scanty costume!).

"It was my 20th birthday, December 17, 1935, and *Anthony Adverse* was a night shoot on the Warner's back lot in the valley. I was barefoot, and well-nigh bare-chested, shivering in the cold [day players got no dressing rooms] when Errol Flynn (then shooting *Captain Blood* retakes) offered his dressing room and the warmth of his electric heater. 'You're a wonderful dancer,' he came on, 'would you teach me how to rumba?'

"I fell for it. I taught him how to rumba - for real, never guessing it was a pick-up line. I figured free dance lessons were equal payment for a warm dressing room. He said, 'Thank you, Ma'am,' at the end of my instructions; having realized how naive and innocent I was, he rumba'd divinely without making a pass. That rape trial was a lie. Errol Flynn would never rape anyone. I'm living proof."

Meanwhile, boyfriend Ty Power, after a stint away from Hollywood on the stage, was signed by Fox and given his first big starring role in a film called *Lloyds Of London*.

"A movie about an insurance company?!" Power moaned to Joan over lunch at Musso & Frank's Grill. "My career's over before it's begun! And my co-star! Madeline Carroll?! She's got to be over thirty if she's a day!" (Ty may have looked 30, but was barely 21 when cast as the contemporary of George Sanders and Madeline Carroll.) First day's shooting almost *did* end Power's much-anticipated stardom. Joan received a tearful phone call at only 11:00 a.m. "I've been sent home. I'm finished. I think I've killed the camera operator! Can I see you right away?"

Mr. Power arrived just behind a giant bouquet of gladioli - ordered by Ty the day before as a "Thanks for love and support."

"They're for my own funeral now," he mourned as they put them in the only thing with water big enough to hold them: the toilet.

What in the world had happened?

"You know all those riding lessons Dad said I'd need? Well, he should have included carriage-driving lessons. My first scene I rehearsed and rehearsed and the horses just walked every time I slapped the reins: movie horses don't strain themselves till they hear the clapperboard. Then, first take, SLAP! the clapperboard goes down right in front of their noses and they take off! I was com-



Joan Woodbury and Henry Wilcoxon (from the Kathie Orrison Collection).

pletely unprepared. I lost the reins, they ran into the camera platform, and the first A.C. was sent to Cedars. They shut down for the day. I *know* I'm going to be replaced! Patia would kill me!"

Joan sat on the edge of the tub, comforting her sobbing boyfriend as best she could. Not one for sentimentality, her resolute nature always took over in emergencies.

"Buck up. Fox isn't going to let their investment go down the drain. They've spent a lot of time, money and publicity on you. I'll bet they're not recasting. They have to replace the camera crew, but it wasn't your fault - it was an accident. I'm sending these flowers to Cedars and sending you home to bed. Take a nap. Wait for the studio to call. I'll bet they call before evening."

Of course, she was right. The call came at 4:00 p.m. "You were right! I'm to be on the set at 7:00 tomorrow. Thanks, Hon."

Joan didn't get to go to the premier. Ty had to take his mother instead. Studio-arranged "dates" were the norm. And it wasn't unusual to see him escort women ten or fifteen years older than he was to nightclubs and openings.

"Another old bag," he'd moan. "Why can't I take someone I choose - like you?"

Between pictures and on weekends, Joan and Ty played tennis, went to the beach and always wound up playing bridge Sunday evenings with Patia (Mrs. Power always insisted her son call her "Patia" instead of Mama).

One Sunday night, according to Joan, after Ty had turned in early because of a 6:00 a.m. call the next morning, Joan and Patia locked horns.

"Now, Joanne," Patia said, knowing Joan's real name always irritated her, "it's time for you to realize Ty has a brilliant future ahead of him and you're not to be part of it. I've devoted my life to sacrificing on his behalf and training him for his career. He will be a big star. And he must only marry a big star. There is no room in Ty's life for someone like you."

And that was that. So, what was Patia's reaction to Tyrone Power's marriage to Annabella and then re-marriage to Linda Christian? ["Tyrone Power did WHAT to Linda Christian?!" Errol

Flynn was heard to laugh at Chasen's.] "We can hazard a guess," Joan observed wryly from the vantage point of 1985. "For heaven's sake, what was Ty doing, a divorced man, getting remarried in a Catholic cathedral in Rome, of all places? Officially, such things weren't sanctioned by the Church, especially fifty years ago."

"Did you two remain friends after the 'Patia Incident'?"

"Yes, of course. I was always bumping into him at Fox - usually at 6:00 a.m. in the make-up department. We'd sit side-by-side under the hair dryers and exchange pictures of our children and studio gossip. Ty wasn't the first man nor the last to buckle under to his mother."

And being married to Cecil B. DeMille's associate producer by then could only have been sweet revenge for Joan.

By 1938 Joan was making *Algiers* with Charles Boyer ("The loveliest man. He was madly in love with his wife. 'Have you met my Pat?' he'd ask. 'Isn't she beautiful!'" and had designs on Henry Wilcoxon...

"I saw him at Ciro's one night. On the dance floor with Lupe Velez. I was going to turn down yet another 'exotic-foreign-beauty' part in *Chasing Danger* until I heard I'd be co-starring with Henry Wilcoxon. 'I'll take it!' I said. We met on November 11, 1938, and we married on December 17, 1938. It was wildly romantic at the time, but I've got to say if I'd known him for six weeks before we married instead of only three weeks - I never would have gone through with it."

Henry, ten years her senior and recently divorced, knew things were doomed from the outset, but went ahead anyway. Why? I asked him before he died.

"Because she was the most beautiful thing I'd ever laid eyes on! Blue eyes, BLUE, with oriental black hair and olive skin. I simply couldn't resist. The last thing I should have been doing was marrying again - nevertheless, I asked her to marry me on our first date."

For the record, when I met Joan, in her late 60s at the time, she looked 20 years younger - had the

(continued)

figure of someone 30 years younger and reminded me of France Nuyen in *The Joy Luck Club*... with blue eyes.

As it was, despite Joan's honeymoon discovery of Henry's blackballing by DeMille and his subsequent bouts of depression coupled with a drinking problem, they remained married for 30 years and three children. "I'd been raised Catholic. I wasn't Catholic, but I'd been raised that way. Marriage was for life. I also wanted to have children – to be the mother that my mother hadn't been. And, after all, I loved him very much. Difficult or not – he needed a great deal of love. He'd lost his mother and spent his life in boarding schools, too."

Then again, there was the lawsuit... Upon learning of Joan's first pregnancy in 1939, Mother Woodbury wasted no time slapping Henry with a lawsuit for loss of support! "It turns out she'd kept every bill from the maternity hospital on hand," Henry related to me. "School, dance lessons, doctors, braces, clothes, shoes, the whole works. Her argument in court was that she'd raised Joan to support her and now she couldn't. We finally settled: and I was thirty thousand dollars poorer. A lot of money in those days." But due to Henry's five-year WWII Naval service, Joan did become the breadwinner for her mother, husband, and daughter, logging some 70 films by the late 1940s. She went to the opera with Charlie Chan, played cowgirls, gangster molls, crusading reporters, and femme fatales. She starred opposite some of Hollywood's biggest names, either "On the way up or on the way down – that's what B-movies were all about: 'place to learn or a last chance to earn.' A three-week shooting schedule was an 'epic.' Actors and actresses wrangled their own wardrobe, did their own hair, and applied their own make-up." No union dues, but no health or retirement benefits, either.

"A fourteen-hour work day was the norm. You got up in the dark – worked as long as there was light – and came home in the dark. Locations were out in Newhall or Agoura or the far reaches of Ventura County – with no studio-provided transportation; we drove ourselves. We shot six-day weeks, including holidays, no extra pay. I was in my teens and twenties – young and strong enough for the grind, but sleep was my most favorite thing in the world – after staggering into a shower to rinse the day's trail dust and make-up off.

"You had to dress for the role when you went to a casting call; those guys had no imagination. A Gypsy part? I wore boots and a Mexican skirt and blouse and lots of jewelry. An island girl? I showed up in a tight sarong and sandals. 'Brenda Starr, Reporter,' saw me dressed in a suit and sensible shoes. A Spanish girl? I brought my scrapbook showing me dancing in Tijuana."

She starred in B's, but got only supporting roles in A's. "A-movies took too much time! I was bored to death. A big day was three pages – maybe. Everyone 'indulged' the star. I made a big movie in 1941 starring Ida Lupino, *The Hard Way*. It was hard for everyone! A whole week and no usable film – Ida was constantly crying in her dressing room and completely unable to concentrate on the set. I was called in to the front office by the producer and director. 'Can you do something with her?' they asked. 'Something's horribly wrong, but we think it's a girl-to-girl thing.' That's putting it mildly. Ida had recently married Louis Hayward, who she was madly in love with – but to no avail. He was gay, it was evidently an arranged-type thing, and they just couldn't get along sexually. I decided no one could do anything about that so we went to lunch at the commissary and I only talked business. 'I think you're great,' I said. 'You're going to be so good in this part – I'm so excited about working with you – what a role – I bet you get nominated! Let's rehearse together after lunch.'

"It worked. Ida decided the think to do was throw herself into her work. And she was a great actress."

Who was her favorite co-star? I asked.

Hum-m-m.

"Tim McCoy was wonderful. A great old man. I worked in a war-effort film for free for the chance to play opposite Edmund O'Brien. I toured in a play with Frances Lederer – a very serious actor. But Nelson Leigh was really something."

The Leigh she referred to was an actor who'd made a career out of playing Jesus Christ. Before it was outlawed in Los Angeles, Joan appeared in the annual Easter Passion Play as Mary Magdalene. All through WWII it played to standing room only at the outdoor Pilgrimage Playhouse in the Hollywood Hills. One spring night in 1945, the play was interrupted by a page running down the aisle shouting the announcement heard from the radio that Germany had just surrendered.

"It was the most incredible experience of my life! Spontaneously, in unison – the entire cast and audience fell to their knees and Leigh stepped forward and BECAME Christ, leading everyone in the Lord's Prayer. That's what the theater is all about. No movie could ever capture it. I thanked God I was an actress that night! To be able to touch people like that. What a privilege!"

As a result, starting in the early 1950s, Joan turned almost exclusively to the stage: writing, directing, and running her own theater group, "The Wilcoxon Group Players," in Hollywood and then the "Valley Players Guild" in Palm Springs from the 1960s until shortly before her death. The only big film she worked on in the 1950s, however, was the grand-daddy of all spectacles: *The Ten Commandments*.

"Biff [Joan's nickname for Henry] made up with DeMille after the war, and he'd been associate producing with him since *Samson And Delilah*, but DeMille would never consider me for a role, no matter how much Biff tried. I was passed over for everything: *Unconquered*, *Samson*, *The Greatest Show On Earth*, and, at first, *The Ten Commandments* too. Finally he wanted our middle daughter, Heather, then eight, to play Moses' older sister who places him in the bullrushes. That meant I would have to be on the set with her, so I was cast as well. I didn't want to do it. In fact, I was furious. 'Just give me one good reason why I should work on this movie' I demanded of Biff. And he said, 'Well, you can always tell your grandchildren you were in Cecil B. DeMille's Biggest Film.' Heather wound up being replaced because of an eye problem, but I was stuck for weeks and weeks filming the orgy scenes on the golden calf – dying of heatstroke from the tons of hair they put us in and going home every night with torn nails, covered with scratches, bruises and cuts from being thrown around and manhandled in take after take. 'An Orgy for Sunday-school Children' is what DeMille called it; very tricky – but he was right, it's on network television every year and the orgy has never been censored."

Nineteen fifty-eight turned out to be the end of Joan's Hollywood life and career, despite her being only 42. A combination of one-two punches over a brief span of months proved too much for the Wilcoxon-Woodbury marriage and Joan in particular. Husband Henry was producing *The Buccaneer* for DeMille and was caught between the family feud of DeMille and his son-in-law Anthony Quinn, *Buccaneer*'s director. Millions disappeared down the drain as tempers flared, egos clashed, DeMille had a heart attack and Henry worked 20-hour days on half-salary to salvage the wreck of *The Buccaneer*. Joan lost her voice for the eleven months of production, nursed Henry when he collapsed from nervous exhaustion, and stood in for him at the studio and openings when *Buccaneer* was released. In November 1958 Tyrone Power

died of a heart attack on the set of *Solomon And Sheba*, age 44. ("Biff and I attended the funeral at Hollywood Cemetery. It was sheer hell – I haven't attended a funeral since – not even DeMille's.") In December, *The Buccaneer* premiered to almost unanimous critical derision. And in January 1959, Cecil B. DeMille died of a heart attack, age 77.

For the long months of *Buccaneer*, Joan and Henry had stayed together for the sake of appearances. [Cecil B. DeMille frowned on divorce.]

"I was at the doctor's office in 1959. He was looking at my throat and telling me he could find nothing physically wrong with me. Finally, he sat me down and said, 'Joan, I think you have to move to a house that's too far away for Henry to drop by for dinner.' I laughed at his little joke, but he was serious. It was my marriage that was unhealthy for me, not my throat. By this time Biff and I really weren't living together. He had a girlfriend across town, I knew it and I didn't care anymore. So I sold the house on Gillcrest in Beverly Hills, packed up the girls and moved to Palm Springs for my health."

Despite all the trials and tribulations, Henry and Joan remained married, but separated for the next ten years. "I'd choreographed Jennifer Jones's dancing in *Duel In The Sun* and she really promoted me, so much so that I opened a dancing school after the war – which I continued down in Palm Springs. That grew into my being one of the founders of 'The Valley Players Guild' and led me to meeting Ray."

Ray Mitchell, a radio actor who'd started in movies as an extra in Victorville on 1939's *Lost Horizon* and joined Joan in marriage in 1972, was gentlemanly, self-effacing, and quiet. Joan considered herself terribly lucky to have finally met the right man for her new life.

And Mother Woodbury lived to 96, dying of old age in 1968 with both Henry and Joan still taking care of her. "I didn't have a funeral – all her friends were long-since gone – and the thought of seeing her in one of those Forest Lawn 'candy boxes' was just too much. Instead, we had a quiet graveside prayer and I placed a picture of her childhood crush, actor E.H. Sothorn, in her casket before the burial."

With the knowledge that Joan's mother lived to 96, I was completely caught off-guard with the news that Joan was dying at 72. "It's TB, darling," she explained over the phone. "Biff had it and it appears I do, too. It isn't cancer like the clinic first thought."

Remember, Joan was Queen of the B's – no health coverage. Blessed with basic good health all her life, the need for yearly check-ups and private coverage had always eluded her. Now, the discovery had come too late.

"Tell Joan I can and will get her into the Motion Picture Country Hospital," Henry's good friend Marvin Paige said when I called him to relate Joan's troubles. "She'll get the best of medical attention – no charge – I promise."

"Marvin is wonderful, and I am most grateful, but I don't want to leave Ray. He takes care of me." Joan sounded adamant, but very weak over the phone. "And please come and see me," she almost whispered; "I'm not contagious anymore." I promised I would drive down to Palm Desert as soon as I finished the movie I was decorating... "Good – because you know I'm your real mother, Kathe, and you're my fourth daughter who I love very much."

I was still working on the film when I got a phone call early one morning: Joan had died February 22, 1989, her husband Ray holding her in his arms.

I saw *Seventh Seal* again not too long ago. And I was just sure one of the women dancing over the hill with the Shadow of Death at the end was Joan...■

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Johnny Sokko And His Flying Robot

A Reflection and an Appreciation

By John Marshall

Ahh, yes, Johnny Sokko. I remember him well. He was a hero to many of us who grew up in the seventies, hard as it is to believe now, fifteen to twenty years later, the mid-seventies were almost a time of innocence. Twelve-year-olds were home watching the likes of *Ultraman* and *Johnny Sokko* on TV not out running drug and prostitution rings like their 1990s counterparts! The seventies were, perhaps, the last innocent decade in which to grow up.

So it is fitting then, that Mister Johnny Sokko was a heroic figure, a hero to millions of twelve year old kids who revelled in his Japanese actions and English words. Johnny was swept into a world of espionage and giant monsters, and it all began because he was outgoing enough to speak to a man standing at the railing of a passenger ship.

In the very first episode of *Johnny Sokko And His Flying Robot* (aka *Giant Robot*), Johnny meets up with Jerry Mano, an undercover agent for the world defense organization, Unicorn. Jerry, known as U-3, is on the ship investigating sightings of a sea monster. Strange events had been occurring in the Pacific. A few weeks earlier, a Japanese Self Defense Force jet had been shot down by an unidentified flying object. That alien ship contained the evil Emperor Guillotine, who threatened to conquer the planet. The ship vanished into the ocean. And now, a mysterious monster was sinking ships.

To Johnny's horror, a scaly arm rises out of the ocean. It is attached to Dracoln, a giant, amphibious fishman, who promptly sinks the vessel on which Johnny Sokko and Jerry Mano are so precariously standing. They manage to survive and are washed up on a barren island which houses the hidden fortress of the Gargoyle Gang, a band of human mercenaries who act as the agents of destruction for the space villain Emperor Guillotine. Their aim is to conquer the world through violence, terrorism, and agonizingly bad dialogue, incorporating such phrases as "Confound it!" and "Drat!" and the ever-reliable "Curses!"

The Emperor has instructed a Doctor Lucius Guardian to construct a giant robot that will assist the Gargoyle Gang's efforts. But the Gargoyle Gang has not counted on Doctor Guardian's strong spirit and sense for sabotage. Having worked against his will to build the robot, he plans to destroy the complex with explosives he has managed to place. After running into Johnny Sokko, Doctor Guardian gives him a microphone watch, with which he can control the robot by voice commands. Well, actually, Guardian doesn't really give him the watch. It's just that when the doctor explains that the robot will respond to "the first voice he hears," Johnny pulls a Bart Simpson and yells "Hey, Robot!" into the watch. Johnny is a bit of a brat here, but it pays off. When the headquarters blows up and the robot still stands, Johnny uses the watch to make the Robot do his bidding!



Photo courtesy of Tom Franck

Johnny and Jerry Mano rendezvous with Unicorn Commander Azuma and his men, and Johnny uses the Robot to destroy Dracoln. Commander Azuma immediately offers Johnny a position in Unicorn (even though it's only to get the Robot). Johnny accepts. Now, you know damn well that any self-respecting kid from the 1990s would have started his own organization, and used the Robot to get whatever he pleased. But as I said earlier, the seventies were innocent times, and kids still had deference to adults.

So, Johnny joins Unicorn and swears a vow of secrecy. "No one must know, not even your parents," says Commander Azuma, probably not realizing that Johnny's parents are feeding the fish with the rest of the ocean liner's passengers. (This fact is rather neatly avoided throughout the series. Occasionally attempts are made to say that Johnny's parents are away, but it's unlikely he was on that ocean liner all by himself.)

But what of the villains of the series? Well, they made it all worthwhile. No line was too painful, no plot too corny, no effect too "special," to stop this army of cool super-villains. Emperor Guillotine led them from a TV monitor, only showing up in the last episode to pull his trump card. His agents were a great mix of fascists, freaks, and scientists, characters of mixed origins who straddled the line

between human and alien. The only true human villains were the Gargoyle Gang troopers and their chief, Spider, a sinister, oily character in dark glasses and a Gestapo-inspired uniform. The purple tunics and berets of the Gargoyle Gang were very sharp, and an amazing contrast to the precious red and yellow outfits of the Unicorn agents, complete with scarves. Spider was in the show from the beginning and led the baddies through the Dracoln escapade and an attempt to use the Nucleon Ball to kidnap Giant Robot. (The Robot was always called Giant Robot in the series. Johnny was too busy saving the world to think up a name for him. And after all, a robot is not - repeat not - a pet.)

But as of the third episode, Spider had to take a back seat to a series of more colorful, and usually smarter, bad guys. Doctor Botanus was brought to Earth to plant the deadly Gargoyle Vine (actually more like a palm tree with a mouth). When Doctor Botanus kidnaps plant specialist Doctor Dorian, Spider introduces himself to Dorian as the Gargoyle Gang leader, only to have Botanus shove him aside. Later, Spider delivers the infant Gargoyle vine to a restaurant in the heart of Tokyo. After making the deadly delivery, Spider throws his cap to the ground and curses: "The commander - just a gardener!"

Spider's story is tragic. Although he was given several solo assignments after the arrival of Doctor Botanus, he never recovered from the resentment of being told his efforts were not enough. A similar thing embittered the late Guy Williams when Jonathan Harris' Doctor Smith was added to the already-cast roster of *Lost In Space*.

But Doctor Botanus had his share of problems as well. After the Gargoyle Vine's first defeat, Botanus is given another chance. But he is living on borrowed time, and he knows it. The threat of death looms every time he fails, and indeed, there is an episode in which he fails once to often.

The actors who play villains in the first half of the series are extremely sinister and even a little scary. Small wonder then, that the villains of later episodes were campier, although no less interesting.

I've already made a quick mention of the special effects in this series. You have to understand, that *Johnny Sokko And His Flying Robot* was made on a very, very, very small budget. But the fact that the crew attempted and the wild and woolly things asked of them, with the money they had, is certainly something to be impressed by!

And now, here's a rundown of the series. It was originally broadcast as *Giant Robot* in Japan from October 11, 1967 to April 1, 1968, appropriately enough. The series was produced by the Toei Company, which went on to become probably the most influential producer of Japanese superhero shows. The young lad who starred in *JS* had previously starred in *Akuma Kun*, an outstanding fantasy series about a boy whose "pet" demon looks like a middle-aged magician.

Giant Robot was brought over to America a short time later, where it was released as *Giant Robot* and later as *Johnny Sokko And His Flying Robot*. Several episodes were cut together to form a TV movie with the inexplicable title of *Voyage Into Space*. Although only running 26 episodes, the series was "stripped" (shown every weekday) and appeared on UHF stations across the country in much the same way as *Ultraman*, *The Space Giants*, and later *Spectreman* were.

And now, the unfolding saga of Johnny Sokko, not to mention his Flying Robot!

1. *Dracolon, A Great Sea Monster*: Emperor Guillotine arrives on Earth, shoots down the Japanese Self-Defense Force, and vanishes into the sea. After a short period of quiet, Dracolon appears and begins destroying ships. Johnny Sokko meets Agent U-3, and together they discover the Giant Robot. Using the Robot to escape from Gargoyle Island, Johnny then destroys Dracolon. Gargoyle commander Spider reports to Emperor Guillotine, who vows to get his Robot back and punish Johnny Sokko.

2. *Nucleon, The Magic Ball*: Johnny Sokko is inducted into Unicorn and given the code number U-7. The Giant Robot undergoes tests so that Johnny can learn of all its weapons. The Nucleon Ball arrives on Earth inside a meteor. When the Giant Robot attacks it, the deadly ball outmaneuvers the Robot and takes it back to Guillotine's headquarters. Meanwhile, Spider captures Johnny in order to gain control of the Robot.

3. *Gargoyle Vine - A Space Plant*: Doctor Botanus is brought to Earth to raise the deadly Gargoyle Vine. He kidnaps Earth's Doctor Dorian, an expert on space plants, to help him. Despite Spider's resentment, the plan goes well: the vine is snuck into a restaurant as a replacement decoration, and grows huge in the center of Tokyo. Even worse, the Robot's weapons are unable to stop it!

4. *Tyrox* (No title available): Oil refineries in the East are being destroyed by Tyrox, a war machine disguised as an Egyptian statue to avoid detection. Doctor Botanus and Spider lead an attack on Unicorn Arabia, and U-3, U-7, and female agent U-5 go undercover as tan-faced, turban-wearing Arabs.

5. *Dragon, The Ninja Monster*: Spider impersonates Unicorn Agent Lloyd from Canada, whose name is repeated so many times in the show it gets to be a running gag. "Lloyd from Canada's coming here! Look! It's Lloyd from Canada!" This episode also marks one of the first times we really have to wonder about the efficiency of the Unicorn organization. With two nations on the brink of war, a mass meeting of Unicorn International is held, which Spider easily infiltrates. He takes part in the conference, still masquerading as Lloyd from Canada. After commenting, "The international situation could blow up at any minute," he leaves a bomb in the conference room and runs out of the building. As for the Ninja Monster, it employs stealth to kidnap a jet and a sub, which has ignited the international friction.

6. *The Giant Claw* (No title available): Spider intends to steal the formula for QQQ Metal (don't ask). It is transparent, so ships and planes made from it would be "invisible to radar." (Hey, I told you not to ask.) Spider bugs the Unicorn offices and learns of a decoy convoy designed to confuse him. He unleashes the Giant Claw, not the buzzard marionette from that 1950s schlocker, but a huge robot hand with similar powers to Giant Robot.

7. *The Decoder* (No title available): A Unicorn base at a lighthouse is destroyed by Skallion, a white, manta ray-type creature. This enables Gargoyle to steal a decoding device and causes many headaches for Unicorn. Agent U-3 allows himself to be captured, in order to snatch the decoder

away from Spider. In the ensuing action, Spider is caught in Skallion's acid spray and is dissolved, much to the satisfaction of Johnny and U-3.

8. *The Challenge Of The Two-Headed Monster*: Another boner for Unicorn. A Gargoyle "defector" is really Spider's replacement Harlequin, who leads U-3 and U-7 into a trap featuring a creature that spits fire and acid from faces on either side of his head. New member U-6, a young girl named Mari, is smart enough not to fall for the ruse and makes Commander Azuma look pretty foolish.

9. *Tentaculon - An Electric Monster*: Doctor Botanus kidnaps a soccer stadium's audience with the aid of Tentaculon, a flying jellyfish who emits electric bolts. This is one of the series' most interesting monsters, and its original roar (a bloodcurdling, high-pitched howl) was replaced in the American dub by the screeches of the Gargoyle Vine and other sound effects.

10. *The Terrifying Sand Creature*: Harlequin revives Dracolon and gives him a new weapon, a choking sandstorm that can be directed and used as a deadly force. Plus, the Gargoyle Gang fulfills an ambition and brainwashes Johnny, who orders the Robot to fly into the sun! The return of Dracolon marked an important factor in the series. Monsters were almost always used twice (for economic reasons), and rarely, if ever, given thorough explanations for their resurrection. It's fair to say that almost all monsters in the series must be biologically engineered, as they are equipped with unnatural weaponry. This means that the Gargoyle Gang could produce multiple versions of any monster they wished. but, let's face it, it doesn't pay to think about things like that too hard.

11. *Amberon: A Synthetic Monster*: Amberon, a dinosaur with dreadlocks, is snuck into Unicorn Headquarters to free a captured Doctor Botanus. Harlequin is held responsible for freeing Botanus, which begins an uneasy alliance. Feeding on energy, Amberon grows stronger when it is attacked with bombs. This creature is killed in exactly the same way as Tentaculon - Giant Robot hurls it onto an oil refinery. KA-BOOM!

12. *The Stolen Train* (Original title unknown): Doctor Botanus is behind the wheel of an updated version of Tyrox, now called Lagorian. The creature swallows up a whole express train so that Harlequin can get his hands on Unicorn's Kyoto Branch chief. "You killed all those people, just to get to me?" exclaims the chief, "Humans wouldn't do that!" Botanus narrows his eyes (no mean feat) and smugly replies, "No, and it's a good thing, because Gargoyles do!" The Giant Robot attacks Botanus' base at the end, and although the B-man escapes, Harlequin appears in no further episodes.

13. *Destroy The Dam!*: Doctor Botanus is in big, big trouble. He falls back on the weapon he knows best: a new, improved Gargoyle Vine. This time, Dr. Dorian is saved from Gargoyle's clutches by the Unicorn agents, and gives them advice on the plant's weaknesses. Giant Robot destroys a dam, cooling the creature down and weakening it enough to be blown apart. Doctor Botanus is struck down by Emperor Guillotine, vanishing into thin air before the horrified eyes of new villain Dangor The Executioner.

14. *Fangar's Masterplan* (No original title available): Gargoyle's new commander, Fangar, has a bad upper plate and an attitude to match. This silly yet sinister foe brandishes a peg leg that doubles as a machine gun! A retooled Nucleon (now called Radion Globe) captures Giant Robot and plans are made to give him a new, evil brain. I'm not sure whether Fangar is related to Dangor. Dangor appears to be half-Harlequin (whom he replaced) and half-Fangar (who followed him.) I guess it's just one of those great mysteries of life.

15. *Opticorn Must Be Destroyed!*: This is the tale of Oegis, a mountainous kingdom in Europe.

Fangar wants to possess the new mineral Oegisite. But the Princess of Oegis is impersonated by Mari (Agent U-6) in order to confuse Fangar. This episode features the Gargoyle Eye, a big eye that can grow feet. Another original Johnny Sokko monster!

16. *The Monstrous Flying Jawbone*: After an attack on the "Tailon Branch" of Unicorn, Fangar is captured, and he declared his identity. ("I am Fangarrrr!") Commander Azuma and the Tailon Bureau Chief escort him toward New York Headquarters in a helicopter. (Must have a lot of fuel!) Anyway, Fangar turns the tables with a mid-air reverse kidnapping, thanks to the Flying Jawbone, a jet-propelled, giant, uhhh...head...that can split in half to attack from two sides. You have to give 'em credit for being creative. The ordinary monster suits on JS are pretty bad, but the weird monsters like Nucleon, Jawbone, and Gargoyle Eye are utterly unforgettable.

17. *Igganog, The Iceberg Monster*: An interesting tale of loyalty and betrayal, adult situations rare for this show. When U-3 and U-7 infiltrate a Gargoyle base in the mountains of Japan, they are saved from death by Hunter, a former Unicorn man who quit after his buddy was killed in action. Hunter feels that the Unicorn leaders see the men as expendable, but eventually learns he's wrong. The Gargoyle base is run by Goldenok, a walking, talking suit of knight's armor. Well, it's a nice change from Fangar! Igganog is a dinosaur-like creature that bears a vague resemblance to a donkey, and who has the power to create snowstorms.

18. *X-7, A Mysterious Enemy Agent*: No one knows the identity of Gargoyle's new operative, X-7. Could there be a connection between him and Kenny Shinisi, a new boy in Johnny's class? Is it safe to go to Kenny's birthday party? This great episode is full of JS corniness, and has a great duel at the end between Johnny and his Robot, and Kenny (complete in kid-size Gargoyle uniform) and his Iron Claw. Oh no, I just gave it away!

19. *The Terrifying Space Mummy*: Probably the weirdest JS episode of all, and that's saying something! The Space Mummy, who dresses like The Invisible Man, only with scar tissue visible beneath the bandages, wants to turn us all into Mummies. He pours mummy juice into a reservoir and then hides out in a nearby convent - that's not a typo - where he and his men disguise themselves as nuns. Female agent U-5 infiltrates the place only to be captured. Space Mummy's monster Shtarker can change his size at will, a feat of stealth that his very, very close cousin the Ninja Monster would have appreciated.

20. *The Malkonians' Robot* (No title available): The Malkonian Republic doesn't want a robot gap, so they force the United Nations into pressuring Unicorn to allow them to examine the Giant Robot in order to build their own. Called Cleopat, it is a conveniently-exact replica of the original. On the testing grounds, Cleopat is spirited away by Tentaculon, as Gargoyle commander Goldenok watches approvingly. Can the Giant Robot defeat an exact double, with the added threat of Tentaculon waiting in the wings?

21. *Torozon, An Enemy Robot*: A classic episode in which Unicorn bases in Switzerland, Bombay, Hong Kong, and Singapore are destroyed by a Gargoyle Robot. It is controlled by "Gargoyle's Number One Scientist," Doctor Snake. Gargoyle agents kidnap Benny Sabola's children to persuade him to turn traitor. You see, Benny is the radar man at Unicorn Japan and with his cooperation, Torozon can approach the base undetected. However, Benny rights things when he gets the chance and is reunited with his kids. Doctor Snake is shot to death in a battle with Unicorn agents.

22. *Metron, The Mysterious Space Man*: A visitor

(continued)

from space offers Unicorn some assistance. Metron is a space policeman and enemy of Guillotine. Although Commander Azuma is suspicious (for a change), Metron is taken into Unicorn's confidence. Sure enough, the whole thing is a trap, and our heroes are cornered by Torozon in a stadium. Metron is one of the wildest villains ever to appear on JS, with his bulbous black head, third eye, and white, web-like pattern over his face. It's a shame he's only in this episode.

23. *Hydrazona: A Terrifying Bacteria*: Evil Professor Hydra, a scarred renegade scientist, has created a slimy bacteria that eats metal. At an inaugural launching of a new flying tanker, Unicorn has guards posted everywhere, but the bacteria destroys the tanker anyway. This sequence includes a marching band of Gargoyle agents that produces one of the most memorable scenes in the series. Later, the bacteria slurps into Unicorn Headquarters despite U-3's earnest efforts to shoot it dead (honest to God!) and the Giant Robot dissolves right before Johnny's eyes! To add insult to apparent injury, Igganog returns to wreak havoc!

24. *Doctor Eingali, Master Of Evil*: A creature from "the fourth dimension of evil" is hired by Guillotine to create an imitation Johnny Sokko. This fake is sent to Johnny to build as a model kit. Once assembled, it steals Johnny's watch and orders the Giant Robot to destroy everything! In spite of the obligatory "which one is real?" scene, Unicorn manages to win out in the end.

25. *Drakulon, Creature Of Doom*: Space Vampire Drakulon enslaves a town and endangers U-3 and U-7 when they go to investigate. A really creepy episode, with some outstanding camera and lighting direction, and a sequence that could have inspired *Night Of The Living Dead*, where the heroes barricade themselves inside a house, thinking they are safe from the marauding horde outside. Giant Robot employs a strange (magic?) flying, burning cross weapon against Drakulon.

26. *The Last Of Emperor Guillotine*: Having run out of ideas, Guillotine launches an all-out offensive which includes reviving many past monsters (thanks entirely to stock footage), and an assassination attempt on Johnny Sokko. However, everything fails, and Unicorn is able to locate Guillotine's headquarters and capture the Gargoyle Gang, including one guy with a beard who has been in every episode and died at least five or six times during the course of the series. Finally cornered, Guillotine grows to giant size and threatens to explode his body, "a mass of atomic energy." To prove his point, he detaches a fingernail and throws it like a grenade. Selflessly, Giant Robot grabs Guillotine in a bear hug and flies into space with him. As Johnny, U-3, Commander Azuma, and the others watch, the robot collides with a meteor, destroying himself and Emperor Guillotine.

The series also produced a TV film that made the rounds on Saturdays. *Voyage Into Space* was edited together from episodes one, two, and twenty-six, plus *Destroy The Dam* and the swallowed train episode.

Many, many happy hours of my childhood were spent with my hero Johnny, and thanks to years of searching, and the magic of video, I can spend the rest of my adult years with him as well. I shall never get back those fifteen years or so we spent apart, and that truly is a tragedy. Three cheers for our hero, Johnny Sokko! What a kid!

Attention Johnny Sokko Fans!

Copies of all 26 episodes, are available from John Marshall. Each tape of five episodes (copied from 16mm TV prints) is \$16.99 plus \$3 Priority Mail postage. Volume Six contains episode 26 plus the original Japanese credit sequence and the compilation film, *Voyage Into Space*. Order from: John Marshall, P. O. Box 283, Rancocas, NJ 08073. ■

30 Years Ago Today...

March 24, 1964: Kitty McShane, vaudeville comedienne and widow of Arthur Lucan (Old Mother Riley), died in London. Following Lucan's 1954 death in the wings of a theater, she resumed the Riley act with Lucan's former understudy Roy Rowland. But "the magic" (such as it was!) was gone.

March 26: A brief service was held for the late Peter Lorre at Pierce Brothers Mortuary in Hollywood; Vincent Price delivered the eulogy. His body was cremated and the ashes placed in the Cathedral Mausoleum, Alcove of Reverence, at Hollywood Memorial Cemetery. Thirty years later, almost to the day, the ashes were stolen.

March 30: "Fun and Games" with Nick Adams aired on TV's *The Outer Limits*.

April, 1964: Composer Albert Glasser and black actor Clarence Muse announced that they were teaming to write an all-Negro opera, *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in Harlem*, which they planned to present on Broadway in 1965. Clarence Muse Enterprises was incorporated to handle the arrangements.

April 8: *Variety* reviewed Allied Artists' *The Strangler*, citing similarities between the Victor Buono-starrer and Laird Cregar's *The Lodger* (1944). "Buono for Buono, a convincing menace all the way. There's always a place on the screen for a fat man who can act..."

April 9: El Brendel died in Hollywood as a result of a diabetic condition.

April 22: *Variety* reviewed Hammer's *The Evil Of Frankenstein*: "John Elder's dialog occasionally raises unintended laughter."

April 29: J.M. Kerrigan (*Werewolf Of London*, *The Wolf Man*) died.

Late April: New York theaters showing *The Horror Of Party Beach* and *The Curse Of The Living Corpse* required moviegoers to sign a "death certificate" at the door, absolving the management of all responsibility for "death by fright" during the screening. *The New York Herald Tribune's* Robert Salmaggi suggested, "They should have had the certificate read 'death by laughing.'"

Early May, 1964: *Crack In The World* with Dana Andrews and Janette Scott began production.

May 5: *The Outlaws Is Coming*, starring The Three Stooges, began production under the title *The Three Stooges Meet The Gunslingers*. One day on the set, Moe Howard celebrated his 50 years in show business. (Howard started his career on May 20, 1914, on a showboat tied along a dock at Jackson, Mississippi.)

May 6: *Variety* called H.G. Lewis' *Blood Feast* "incredibly crude and unprofessional from start to finish...an insult even to the most puerile and salacious of audiences." The film played in L.A. theaters and drive-ins on a double-bill with the Italian *The Playgirls And The Vampire*.

May 8: "The Sign Of Satan" with Christopher Lee aired on *The Alfred Hitchcock Hour*.

May 15: *Time* reviews *Black Sabbath*: "Silly stuff, of course, but it's nice to know that a monster emeritus [Boris Karloff] can somehow manage to eeeeeeeek out a living."

May 19: *The Night Walker*, directed by William Castle, began production.

May 29: The next-to-last *Twilight Zone*, "Fear" with Hazel Court aired.

May 30: Les Baxter's mother died in Hollywood.

June ?, 1964: Paul Carpenter, star of England's *Fire Maidens Of Outer Space*, died at age 43. *First Men In The Moon*, probably Carpenter's last movie (he played a bit part), is released later in the year.

June 8: *Two On A Guillotine* began production.

June 10: *The Hush...Hush, Sweet Charlotte* troupe returned to Hollywood following a week's location filming in and around a huge plantation near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Among the returnees were stars Joan Crawford (later replaced by Olivia de Havilland) and Bette Davis. A \$200,000 replica of the plantation was built on one of the 20th Century-Fox sound stages for the filming of interiors.

June 15: The initial episode of ABC's *Voyage To The Bottom Of The Sea*, "The Village Of Guilt" with Richard Carlson and Anna-Lisa, began production on Fox's Westwood lot.

June 15: Mayor Yorty of Los Angeles proclaimed this date Joan Crawford-Bette Davis Day and honored the stars at a 20th Century-Fox studio commissary luncheon hosted by *Hush...Hush, Sweet Charlotte* director Robert Aldrich.

June 16: The Woolner Brothers announced in *The Hollywood Reporter* the impending production of *Return Of The 50' Woman*, which they planned as a big-budgeted, color and CinemaScope sequel with a name cast. The black-and-white original with Allison Hayes had already reportedly grossed well over \$1,000,000.

June 17: Los Angeles Superior Court Judge Macklin Fleming rejected the application for a preliminary injunction against exhibition of AIP's *The Masque Of The Red Death*. The injunction by Alex Gordon Productions named AIP, Vincent Price, Charles Beaumont, R. Wright Campbell and others. (Gordon, who had once attempted to produce his own version, felt that his script had been plagiarized.) According to Judge Fleming, similarities between the AIP movie and the Gordon script (beyond those contained in the Poe story) only reflected the standard ingredients for every Vincent Price horror performance, for which each script was designed.

June 24: Norman, Oklahoma, police arrested the accused leader of a devil-worshipping cult that vandalized a church and plotted to exhume the body of its idol, the recently-deceased Peter Lorre. Wheelchair-bound Larry McLean, 20, a University of Oklahoma student, was arrested in Elk City where he lived. One paper recovered by the police indicated that the cultists planned to exhume Lorre's corpse and restore it to life.

June 29: AIP's 8th Poe, *The Tomb Of Ligeia*, starring Vincent Price, began production in England.

Late June: *The Hollywood Reporter* reviewed *The Masque Of The Red Death*: "Masque is not up to AIP's past films in this genre. It suffers from a thin, underdeveloped story."

July 10, 1964: AIP announced that *The Time Travelers* was entered in the Second Annual International Festival of Science Fiction Films at Trieste, Italy (running from July 9-18). Mrs. Sylvia Nicholson represented AIP at Trieste. On July 29, her husband James H. Nicholson hosted a New York luncheon introducing new AIP contract player Susan Hart to the press and theater men.

July 21: *The Human Duplicators* rolled at Producers Studios.

July 24: Elizabeth Montgomery, star of Screen Gems' upcoming *Bewitched* TV series, gave birth to a baby boy. Series production began on August 10.

August 13, 1964: Carol Ohmart signed a contract to co-star in *Cannibal Orgy* (*Spider Baby*).

August 24: Hammer's *She* with Ursula Andress began production.

September 2, 1964: Morris Ankrum, 68, died at Huntington Hospital in Pasadena.

September 2: *Variety's* Robe caught *The Last Man On Earth* at the RKO Palace in New York; he called the film "weak ammunition for even the bottom half of a double bill." In New York it played first-run on a double-bill with Universal's *I'd Rather Be Rich* with Sandra Dee.

September 7: Tallulah Bankhead went before the cameras for the first time in a decade for her role in Hammer's *Die! Die! My Darling!*

September 16: Lon Chaney Jr.'s last good horror movie, *Witchcraft*, was reviewed by *Variety*. Audiences were provided with a plastic "witch deflector."

September 22: AIP announced that Boris Karloff would be joining Vincent Price and Susan Hart in the cast of their upcoming *The City In The Sea* (*War-Gods Of The Deep*).

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Ridin' The Rails With Lon Chaney

by Michael F. Blake

Railroads were an integral part of motion pictures during the silent screen era from the very early days to *The Great K & A Train Robbery* (1926) with Tom Mix and Buster Keaton's classic *The General* (1927). The picture considered to be a tribute to the men of the railway was made during the final days of silent pictures.

Thunder (1929) featured one of Hollywood's biggest stars during that period, Lon Chaney. Known as "The Man of a Thousand Faces" because of his unique ability to use make-up in such films as *The Hunchback Of Notre Dame* and *Phantom Of The Opera*, Chaney was an ideal choice for the role of "Grumpy" Anderson, a veteran engineer of the Chicago-Northwestern Railroad. While his make-up was not as elaborate as some of his better-known roles, Chaney aged himself from his 46 years to a man of 65 with the aid of grey hair and highlights and shadows.

The plot centers around "Grumpy" Anderson, veteran railroad engineer, who is determined to bring his train in on time no matter what. This single-mindedness eventually alienates him from his son Tommy, a train fireman, who blames his father for the death of his brother who was killed in the railyards after working an overly long shift. While driving the train carrying his son's coffin, Grumpy and Tommy get into a heated argument and do not see the approaching train crossing their path, causing a massive wreck. Grumpy is relegated to the locomotive machine shop after the accident, where he eventually has a chance to oversee the repair of his old engine. Meanwhile, heavy rains in the south are causing tremendous flooding and isolates hundreds of people, including Grumpy's daughter-in-law and grandson, as well as Tommy's new girlfriend, Zella. There is a desperate need for trains to run relief for the Red Cross and Grumpy and his engine are called into action. With Tommy as his fireman, grumpy plows ahead, even when told the train tracks are under four feet of water. "Well, any place there's a track pardner...I ride!" he tells them and drives his train through the flood waters to rescue the stranded people, including his daughter-in-law and grandson.

Thunder was Chaney's last silent film made

while he was under contract at MGM Studios. The film had been in various stages of story development for three years prior to its going into production on March 3, 1929. Filming began on location in and around the Chicago and Northwestern Railroad yards in Green Bay, Wisconsin. Unlike the warm days of early spring in Southern California, Green Bay was extremely cold and working conditions were rough. After three weeks of location filming, the company returned to the MGM Studios to finish the film. While working in the near zero degree weather, Chaney caught a cold which developed into walking pneumonia. Chaney continued working, citing his old trouper's spirit of not wanting to hold up production rather than see a doctor and take a much needed rest. It wasn't until April 28, 1929, with Chaney's temperature soaring to 102 degrees, that production was halted on orders from the actor's physician. Lon returned to work May 13, and finished ten days later. The movie was released to theaters on July 8, 1929.

The film featured the Chicago railroad terminal and the various yards in the opening of the picture. Later in the picture the locomotive works building served as a location when Chaney's character is relegated to the shop after the train crash. There is a touching scene where Chaney is at work on a drill press as his wrecked train engine is hauled into the shop. His train's bell rings as it is being moved, and at first Chaney stops his work thinking he hears the familiar bell, but realizes he must be hearing things. The bell rings again and this time he knows it's not his imagination and goes over to supervise the placement of his old engine. He tenderly runs his hands over the large train wheels as he smiles, much like a proud father watching a son.

The effect of the train crash and the train rushing through the flood waters was accomplished by the use of actual model trains in a miniature set. One reviewer said that the audience jumped up and cheered when Chaney drove the train through the flooded tracks to save the people.

Veteran railroad man and inspiration for the song *Casey Jones*, John MacIntosh, appeared in the film playing an employee of the railroad. Lon Chaney became good friends with Fred J. Stocker,

general manager of the Chicago-Northwestern Railroad, while the film was in production. A year later, when Chaney was critically ill with lung cancer and the severity of his illness was made public, Mr. Stocker offered to donate blood and his trains were at Chaney's disposal on a 24-hour notice if Lon needed them.

Despite being one of the last silent pictures, *Thunder* performed well at the box office earning a worldwide gross of over \$1 million dollars, when an average ticket price was between 50 to 75 cents. Unfortunately *Thunder* is considered a "lost" film, since no print is known to exist. Until the introduction of a safety film stock in the 1950s, all movies were made on a nitrate stock, which gradually decomposed and eventually turned to dust. There is always the hope that a print will eventually surface, possibly in a European film archive or in a private collection.

Many film critics praised Chaney's work in the film, but probably his highest compliment came from the Brotherhood of Locomotive Engineers. Lon Chaney became the first actor to be given an honorary membership in this organization for his performance in *Thunder*, a tribute to the men who kept the trains moving, even when the rails were four feet under water. ■

Michael F. Blake is the author of *Lon Chaney—The Man Behind The Thousand Faces*. Published by The Vestal Press.



It's hard to believe that Lon Chaney was only 46 years old when he took on this role of a 60-something train engineer.

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Casual Company: Part 3 . . .

by Edward D. Wood Jr.

Top let the receiver fall back to its cradle as Elbo feigned a yawn. "Ho hum."

Top looked at him. "And no cracks from you."

"I was just yawning," he said indignantly.

Jim smiled. "At least he had his mouth open."

Hashmark folded the piece of paper, he had been writing on, and put it into his pocket. "If you'd go to bed instead of gallivanting around all night, you would be ready for work the next day, and not be yawning all over the place."

"Gallivanting?" cried Elbo. "If you wouldn't give me so much work to do I might be able to get some sleep and not have to stay in this God forsaken office all day and night."

"Oh, don't let the office bother you....Maybe you don't like the office, huh?" tempted the First Sergeant.

With a sorry for himself attitude, Elbo continued. "In the day time I don't mind. It's the twenty-four hour service that I'm against."

Top settled back in his chair. "Well, we'll see what we can do about it, just for you," he said and his voice sounded very honest.

Elbo leaned forward across his desk, the gleam of hope burning bright in his eyes. "You mean easier hours?"

"Well....maybe," said Hashmark in the same matter-of-fact voice.

Really pleased at the expectations of shorter hours and easier work, Elbo leaned back in his chair, put his feet up on the desk and crossed his hands across his stomach. "That would be great Top," he smiled. "Two, three hours a day. That would be just the ticket."

Top came forward in his chair, fast. "I'll see if I can't get you a transfer right back overseas," he shouted.

Elbo's chair came back to all four's on the floor as its occupant skipped quickly out of it and across the floor to pat his First Sergeant on the back. "Top... Top, old boy. Did you say I could buy you a drink, down at the slop shoot tonight: Sure would like to buy you a drink. I haven't had the honor of buying you a drink in a long, long time."

Jim watched the scene with amazed, amusement. "Listen to this one," he said.

Jerry made the motions that are known to ear bangers around the earth; that of banging one's ears with one's hand and saying... "Bwang...Bwang."

Elbo turned on Jerry. "You should talk."

Top smiled. "That will be enough ear banging for today Elbo, now get the lead out of your....head....and get to work." Then Top added, "I accept your offer for the beer this evening."

Elbo walked slowly back to his desk and browsed through a page or two of the official looking papers as Top spoke. When his senior non-commissioned officer had finished he looked up. "Alright, Top," he said. "I'll get to work. No rest for the wicked. You just have no feeling for man..." he pointed toward Jim... or beast... he pointed toward Jerry... "Or Marine..." he pointed to himself... "for that matter."

Top cocked his head and brought his eyes to fine slits in his head. "If I could find a Marine maybe I would show some respect."

For the moment, once again, the office settled down. Elbo pushed the papers around his desk to the position at which he could best see them, then



when it looked as if he was about to go to work, he changed the papers around again, cursed, and tore them up. Top watched the movements and at times it looked like his rugged, wrinkled, frowning face would burst into a wide grin. But the First Sergeant was not a man that smiled very often. At least he tried his best to make everyone believe he didn't. Jim had completed his letter, so he folded it and put it in a large brown, official envelope, wrote on an address in long hand, then sealed it. Jerry threw the mystery magazine, with disgust, into the waste paper basket and began to type on his reports. Several minutes later he took the pages out of the typewriter, very carefully touching only the very corners of the pages then laid them on the desk, drew the carbon out from between the sheets and smiled with it completed. He separated the three sheets and the happiness suddenly dropped from his face. "Damn it," he cursed. "I put the carbon in backwards."

Hashmark produced a pack of playing cards from the top drawer of his desk, shuffled them, then laid out the seven rows of cards for a game of solitaire. It wasn't until he had cheated himself several times, picked at this nose urgently and lost the game anyway, that he turned again on Jim. "How long did the Captain stay this time?"

"Oh, ten minutes, or so," replied Jim lighting another cigarette and throwing the remainder of the pack to his desk and the burnt match stick to the ashtray.

"Ten minutes," exploded Top. "The banker...the...rabbit snatcher."

As one would hear the announcer on the radio, soap opera program say, Jim said. "Aha...aha...aha...He's our Commanding Officer."

Top slammed his fist on his desk and rose

menacingly toward the Staff Sergeant. "Well, I'll be a blue, blazed son-of-a-sea-cook. Since when do you start telling me who's who around here. I'll have your stripes one of these days," yelled First Sergeant Daniel "Hashmark" O'Hare.

"Now watch your blood pressure, Top," soothed Jim.

"Eeeeeerrrrruuuuffffff," yelled Top with the lack of anything else to say. He turned suddenly on Elbo. "Get those reports done, Elbo."

"I'm working on them."

"Well," shouted Top, crossing to his desk. "Stop working on them and get them done."

Elbo soft shoed to Top's desk behind the retreating First Sergeant. "Top...Top...Old boy, why don't you go out for some more coffee and maybe I can get my reports done."

Top flew out of the chair he had just seated himself in and made tracks after the fleeing Elbo. "That did it...That did it..." screamed First Sergeant Hashmark O'Hare. "You are going out on the next boat. I'll see to that."

With Top standing directly over him, Elbo ventured. "Well, you see to that, while I see to chow." He quickly shoved his wrist watch up in Top's face. "It's just about that time," he added.

Jim looked up from an unanswered letter from Joan and said. "Just a minute and I'll be through."

Jerry pushed the pile of papers from him. "It'll be a cold day in Hell before I get all these reports done."

As Elbo started for the door and Jim replaced his unanswered letter in the used envelope, the door opened to admit a very short, yet very pretty, and well built young woman. She entered the room closing the door behind her. Her skin tight, shimmering, blue satin dress gave the appearance of a woman slightly older than she really was. She brushed her golden hair over her shoulders, smiled at the room's occupants, went calmly to Jim, looked at his stripes, shook her head, turned to face Elbo, looked at his stripes, shook her head again then continued on to Jerry. She looked at his arm and seeing no stripes she smiled, shaking her curly, long haired, head, happily. "Are you the First Sergeant?" she asked thinking her search was at last over, when really her decision had been a mistake caused by Jerry wearing a new shirt upon which he had not had time to sew his one stripe.

Jerry gave her a quick once over and said. "No, Mam, but at this minute, I'd sure like to be."

Top threw his pencil to the desk and turned on Jerry. "That will be enough of that," he said turning his attention full on the woman. "I'm the First Sergeant, Miss. What can I do for you?"

The woman blushed at Jerry for her mistake, then turned to face the First Sergeant, while Jerry, admiring the satin material of her dress with his eyes, seated himself at his desk. For a moment she fumbled for the right words then said, firmly. "My husband has been here at this hospital for two weeks now, waiting for a discharge, when will he get it?"

Having heard this same question a hundred times in his twenty years, Top simply said. "Lady, it's like I said. I'm the First Sergeant, not Mr. Anthony." Top had given this answer each time he had received the question so many time in his

Marine Corps years.

"Silly, of course you're not Mr. Anthony," she smiled and turned to the others and with more dignity than the top movie talent of Hollywood, and with more pride than a Congressional Medal of Honor winner, she said. "That's my Husband."

Jim, Elbo and Jerry smiled... "that's nice" looks at the woman then she again turned to the First Sergeant who had been stunned by the woman's come back. To all those people he had said that line to, never before had he received this answer. Top put his face in his hands for a moment then looked again to the woman.

"I give up. Let's start at the beginning again. Just once more. Now what was it you wanted?"

The woman moved around behind the desk and proceeded to sit very daintily on the First Sergeant's knee. He puffed a few times as she put her hand on his cheek and caressed it softly. "Poor Tommy," she said. "Tommy Anthony, that's my husband. He is so lonely, and he just can't seem to get any liberty. Can't you see if you can get him just a little liberty?"

First Sergeant Daniel O'Hare, at that moment, the embarrassed First Sergeant Daniel O'Hare, the most embarrassed First Sergeant in the whole Marine Corps, brushed at the woman's caressing hand, but it did no good. She was determined to make an impression on the man called, "Top," and she was carrying out her plans to the fullest extent of her ability, which included kissing the man fully on the forehead, leaving her lip prints, a deep red, behind when she had finished.

"He has every night off, doesn't he?" cried Hashmark.

The woman let her hand drift to the First Sergeant's bald spot, and with her fingers she curled the remainder of his thinning hair over it. "Yes," she answered. "But he has to be in at midnight, and then the evening is so young," she added as an explanation. "I'm sure you could arrange it for poor little me."

"I'll see what I can do about it," surrendered the beaten First Sergeant.

The girl jumped happily from the First Sergeant's knee in a rustle of satins and leaving a trace of nice smelling perfume where she had been. "I knew you would," she said, then walked quickly toward the door, opened it then once more turned to face the occupants of the office. Her smile was warm and inviting. "Bye now," she said, and was gone, closing the door behind her.

Elbo looked after the woman until the door was closed then quickly he drew out his clean handkerchief and imitated the woman's swinging walk as he made his way to the First Sergeant's desk, holding the handkerchief out before him. Top still stunned by the woman's advances simply looked at the handkerchief dangling before his face. Elbo made a disgusted look and rubbed a portion of the lipstick from Top's forehead with his finger, and showed it to the man.

Anger swarmed through the First Sergeant's face as he tore the handkerchief from Elbo's grip and rubbed off the remainder of the lipstick. "Mister Anthony be damned.... Get that lug up here," he shouted to Jim between handkerchief strokes.

Elbo turned to the Staff Sergeant. "Do it directly after chow, Jim."

"I'm giving the orders around here, you..." yelled Hashmark. "Do it right now," he again commanded in Jim's direction.

Jim looked from his watch to the First Sergeant, then said informally. "But, Top, it's chow time?"

Hashmark surveyed the group for half a second then his booming voice rocked the room as it so frequently did during the course of the day. "I don't care if it's midnight. Get that Anthony guy up here and don't give me any more argument

about it."

The fire that jumped through Hashmark's eyes caused Jim to get slowly up from his desk and make his way across the room toward the telephone. Jim wanted to call the man, with the six stripes, several names but thought better of it. He took the receiver in his hand and when the base operator answered he said. "Ward B-29 please...." Then he waited while the ward was buzzed by the operator. A moment later the voice of the ward attendant answered him. Jim said. "Hello...Ward B-29?... This is Staff Sergeant Armstrong of the Marine Office.... Send Corporal Thomas Anthony up here.... on the double.... Thanks." He replaced the receiver and walked silently, but begrudgingly back to his desk.

Elbo started to pace back and forth across the office. He was trying desperately to calm his firing temper.

Hashmark eyed them again. "All you guys ever want to do is give me an argument. Now listen, when I say a thing is to be done, then it is to be done and no back talk about it." Hashmark pointed to the stripes on his tailored shirt sleeve. "These stripes say so," he added.

Unconsciously Jerry argued. "But gosh, Top. It always happens right at chow time."

Top turned on him. "I don't care if it happens at midnight. In the Old Marine Corps we had a twenty-four hour call and you never heard a squawk about it. One thing sure. You never heard back talk to a First Sergeant. He would just as soon pop you one right on the nose if you even looked like you were going to give him some back talk."

With all the argument going on about him, and getting more heated all the time, Elbo found it impossible to cool off. He started to mumble quite audibly. ".....every noon time it's the same old thing... wait... wait... wait...."

Hashmark turned on him. "None of your lip now."

Jerry came to aid Elbo. "Don't pick on him Top, he's right you know."

This was too much for any self respecting First Sergeant to take. He blew his stack. "Great balls of fire. That's mutiny. I'll run you all up before the Old Man." Top was out of his chair and breathing down Elbo's forehead. "You'll get the brig for this."

Jim came off the corner of his desk where he had been watching the fire works getting started. "If you put us all in the brig, who'll do the work around here... You...?"

Hashmark charged toward him. "By God, I don't need to run you guys up...." As Top reached the center of the office, the door to the exterior opened to admit a tall, thin type of man, who came to stand among the excitement. Hashmark paid him no attention, except to push him out of the way in order to put his full attention on the Staff Sergeant. "These stripes ain't sewed to my skin," he continued. "I'll take you all on, one at a time or all at once. It make's no difference to me... Come on... I'm waiting...."

Jerry lifted his typewriter, ready to throw it, should the battle get too close to him. "This is it me, war at last," he shouted.

Top pushed the tall, gangling man from his path again. "I'm gonna change the color of some eyes around here and right quick."

Elbo grabbed the small American flag from its stand on the Captain's desk and jumped atop his C.O.'s desk. Waving the flag freely and in wide circles, he yelled. "Stand bye for the Beaumont beachhead...."

The tall, thin man had had about enough of this kind of greeting. He stamped his feet firmly on the floor, did an about face and made for the door. "If I'm intruding, I'll come back later," he called over his shoulder.

His words brought the office to a hush. Top looked toward the retreating figure. "Get the blue blazes out of here," he shouted, then asked. "Who are you anyway? What do you want?"

The office settled back to its former self, silent, as the man turned from the door to face the First Sergeant. "Well, truthfully," he began. "I don't want anything. You sent for me. I'm Corporal Anthony from Ward B-29."

Hashmark turned, silently, on his heels and walked back to his desk. He seated himself, wiped at the now imaginary lipstick mark on his forehead then looked back at the Corporal before him. Corporal Anthony came closer to the desk and stood at strict attention. "Ohh, yes, Corporal Anthony..... Your wire was just here to pay me a most unusual, and most uninvited visit. She seems to think you don't get enough liberty."

Having heard that he had the prospect of getting more liberty, Corporal Anthony almost forgot himself and leaned on the corner of the First Sergeant's desk, but he caught himself just in time, and continued to stand at strict attention, as he related his piece to his First Sergeant.

"You know, Top, that's a funny thing. Maxine... Maxine, that's my wife. Maxine told me that very same thing just last night. Tommy, she said, you don't get half enough time off. Why don't you speak to your Commanding Officer about it. So I says, Okay, honey, I will." He gazed into the First Sergeant's face and felt quite secure because in the First Sergeant's face he found a smile. True, a strange kind of smile, but never-the-less there was a smile there. Anthony felt quite good as he continued. "You're not the Commanding Officer, but you are the First Sergeant, and that's good enough for me, so I'm asking you. How about more liberty?... Huh...?"

The strange smile still strong on his face, Hashmark came slowly forward in his chair. "Tell me Corporal. What is it that you are in the hospital for?"

Anthony shook his head and shoulders in a variety of jumping, nerve, movements that appeared to be just what it was. A much over emphasized case of "Gold bricketis." Anthony explained. "Nothing.... Nothing, that time and liberty can't cure."

The First Sergeant relaxed back in his chair. "Okay, you can have more liberty. You can have every night, all night off."

Jerry looked at Elbo, and Elbo looked at him, all with the expression of disbelief and amazement on their faces. "Could this be First Sergeant Daniel 'Hashmark' O'Hare speaking," became the only thought in each of their minds.

Corporal Anthony's smile could have lighted up the room. "Well... Gosh Top... I don't know just what to say... But, Gosh, thanks... I don't mind telling you, I was sure scared of coming in here and asking you for more liberty. I heard you were a pretty tough guy to get along with. But you're not as bad as I thought you'd be. You're not half bad at all."

Top smiled. "Of course, not, and furthermore. You came in here a Corporal." The smile dropped from Hashmark's face and in its place came the look of mean hardness. "About face, Private First Class," he thundered.

Stunned, Corporal Anthony lost his smile and did a quick an about face which he later attributed more to sudden reaction to the command than to any thought on his part.

"Forward march," continued the First Sergeant in his loud official, booming voice. "And close the door behind you, Private."

Anthony moved slowly toward the door. As he reached the Staff Sergeant's desk he heard Hashmark yell. "Take his stripes, Jim."

(continued)

Once again, their faith restored in Hashmark, Jerry and Elbo settled back with satisfaction while Jim reached up and tore the Corporal stripes from Anthony's arm as he passed by. Anthony stopped, put his hand to the spot where the stripes had been and held it as if he had, there, been wounded. He looked at this arm, then into the air around him and said.... "It all goes to show you." He looked like a very weak little man now. "It just isn't worth it, but my wife isn't going to like this...." Corporal Anthony gave a look of complete despair and left the office.

"You're a hard man, Top," said Jim as he put the Corporal Stripes in a drawer of his desk.

"You just gotta' be in this racket, or someone will walk all over you," explained Hashmark. "The more breaks they get, the more they want and the less they pay back. I'm strictly, G.I."

Jim closed the drawer of his desk with a bang. "Yeah....I see what you mean."

There came a moment of uneasiness in the office, then Elbo looked to his watch. "Well, what about the chow we started for a little while ago? If we don't hurry the staff line will be as long as the patient's line."

Jerry tapped the huge pile of paper beside his typewriter. "As I said before, it'll be a cold day in Hell before I get all these reports done, so let's shove off."

Hashmark turned on them like a machine gun. "And be sure you don't take any hour. I'm not running a bank around here."

"An hour and ten minutes," jested Elbo.

"Listen. When I let you guys off at ten minutes AFTER twelve, I expect you back and behind those desks at five minutes BEFORE twelve, and I don't mean maybe." Hashmark wasn't jesting.

Elbo looked toward Jim. "Please remind me to make the clock go backwards," he said.

The three enlisted men left the office quickly.

The Friday, noon meal consisted of frankfurters and lima beans. That is, the frankfurters and lima beans waited to those who suffered the torments of what seemed to be a mile long line of waiting, longing, hungry Marines and Navy patients. Being on the hospital staff, Jim, Elbo and Jerry were permitted to walk to the head of the chow line, which, of course, they readily did. This practice will be found at most any service base or hospital because the patients have very little to do and can take the time to wait in lines, where as the staff have to rush in and eat, then get back to their offices to perform their various duties.

As Jim, Elbo and Jerry walked to the head of the line once of the Swabbies turned to face them. "Make way for the office brass," he razed, good naturedly.

Elbo turned quickly to face the outspoken Navy patient. "The only brass around us, at present," he said, "...is the Marine Corps emblem on our hats, and the brass that head of yours is made of." Elbo then ran to catch up with his friends.

Top cruised along just behind his three clerks, until he saw that Jim was about to be served, then he jumped in ahead of him. Jim dirty looked his First Sergeant and stepped back, empty tray in hand. "Age before beauty," replied the First Sergeant without cracking a smile.

Hashmark liked to get things done fast, including the eating of his meals. He had his full meal gone while Elbo was still trying to make a dent in the hot dog on the plate before him. "Damn thing must be made of rubber," he complained, trying again to cut the meat.

Jerry looked at Hashmark's empty plate. "What do you do, Top, take your teeth out and slice it down whole?"

Top looked at him a moment. "I'll think of an answer for that when we get back to the office," he replied picking up his tray and leaving his men at

the table.

Jim was the next one to finish his meal. He turned to his two friends as he picked up his tray. "See you in the sweet box. I've got a telephone call to make. Want to arrange something for tonight."

"Are we included?" inquired Jerry.

"When have you every included me?" Jim questioned, then took off to dispose of his tray and dirty dishes.

When Jim had gone, Jerry turned to Elbo. "Sure wish I had the stuff to get dames like Jim has. He sure can turn up with the pick of the crop as far as the dames around here are concerned. I think I'd be willing to give up a month's pay to learn that technique of his. Hello...he says...Come on up to my apartment...she says...so up they go...and before you know it he's pulling the wool, sweater that is...over her eyes and they're at it. It seems like his technique never fails. It always works."

"It takes years of study," enlightened Elbo again attempting to cut the hot dog with his knife.

"He's no older than I am," defended Jerry.

"He's studied."

"Well, I went to school, stupid," remarked Jerry trying not let Elbo get the best of him.

"And you came out the same way," answered Elbo, at last taking the hot dog in his fingers, biting off a large hunk of it, filling his mouth quickly with lima beans, then washed the whole mess down with a gulp of black coffee.

Elbo smiled conqueringly toward the Navy mess cook who had been watching him.

Captain Robert Roberts and the only person he would take on his hunting expeditions, Lieutenant "Muscles" Morgan, female athletic officer of the base, walked slowly through the under brush of the mountainous area behind the hospital zone. The Captain had fastened leafy branches to his head and in and around his belt line. The lieutenant, in her G.I., white sweat shirt and white trousers looked at him with the usual look that she had for the man....Dubious....She raised her rifle, suddenly, and let fire at a glass jug in the weeds a few feet ahead of them. The report of the rifle echoed through the mountains as the glass jug flew into a thousand pieces. The Captain looked at her, angered, then stopped and put his hands on his hips, holding his carbine through the loop of his right arm.

"Must have been some water in it," explained the Lieutenant, lowering her rifle.

"Now, what did you go and do that for?" questioned the frowning Captain.

"Got to shoot at something, might just as well be stationary objects. I haven't seen anything moving in five months."

"You've probably scared all the rabbits into the next county with that shot."

"So what! We've been coming up here every day for the last five months and we haven't seen a rabbit yet," griped the beautiful cherry red haired girl as she kicked the ejected, empty, cartridge from the clump of grass to which it had fallen.

"It takes time," assured the Captain. "Anyway. How do you expect to get a shot at one when you continually shoot at jugs and tin cans and telephone poles, and Hell's bells, while you continue to wear that damned white outfit."

"So I should become a walking tree, like you," she related, surveying the Captain.

"It's camouflage."

"It's nonsense."

"By God when I come in these mountains alone at least I get a shot at a rabbit every once in awhile. Everytime I bring you along you shoot at everything in sight, and scare all the rabbits away."

"I've got to shoot at something. If I had to wait to get a shot at a rabbit around here, I'd be an old woman before I fired my first shot," cried Muscles. "Anyway, after today you can just continue com-

ing up in these mountains alone. I'm hungry and I'm going back down to the chow hall and get some chow. And don't bother to ask me to come along again because it will be just a waste of breath. The answer will be, no, from now on." Lieutenant Muscles Morgan turned and started back in the direction from which they had come.

"Now wait a minute, Muscles." Called the Captain as he ran to her and took her arm in his, bringing her to a stop. "I'll buy you dinner at the Ships Service when we get back. Besides, we'll only stay up here another couple of minutes. I have to get back to the office pretty quick, anyway. Let's just take a look over that next ridge. If we don't see anything by that time, we'll call it an afternoon and give it up as a bad job....until later."

"I'm hungry now."

"Just over the next ridge."

"Food will do me more good than walking over to any ridges."

"There's probably a whole school of rabbits just over that ridge, just a sitting up waiting for us to find and pepper with our lead. Come on, Muscles, be a sport."

"Being a sport is one thing, but when your stomach is growling, that's another. And my stomach has been growling and grumbling for over an hour. If we haven't seen any rabbits up here in the last five months, why should today be an exception. Besides, how do we know there are any rabbits up here. I never saw any."

"I have. Every morning I see them, but it is always when I don't have my carbine with me. Why they come down and sit right in the middle of the hospital streets. That's why I took to carrying my carbine with me where ever I go. Why I got a shot at one last night when I was going to my barracks to bed. Got away, but I did get a shot at him."

"Ohh, come on, Captain, let's break it up and go eat."

"Just as soon as we look over that ridge."

"It's too far off."

"It's not more than two hundred yards."

"Looks more like two miles."

"Ten minutes should do it," continued the Captain trying to convince his junior officer.

But the pretty red headed girl was stubborn. "We'll miss chow at the chow hall."

"I told you I'd buy you dinner at the Ships Service."

"Last time we ate at the Ships Service and you said you'd foot the bill, I ended up paying," complained Lieutenant "Muscles" Morgan wetting her parched lips with the end of her tongue.

The Captain watched this movement of her tongue. He had always admired it, and whenever she did this wetting of her lips, and she did it often, he watched and lost track of what he had been saying or she had been saying for that matter....But the part about her paying sunk in and stuck to his mind. "Well....that is....I forgot my wallet that time....Wouldn't happen again in a month of Sundays."

"You'll find another excuse this time."

"I promise you, on my word of honor as an Officer and a Gentleman. I will buy you dinner."

"Your word...Your word is about as good as that of the man in the moon."

"Now look. We've been arguing for all of ten minutes. In that time we could have been up and over that ridge, and be on our way back. But you'd rather stand here arguing." The Captain saw her weakening.

"Just over that ridge, huh?"

"That's right. Just up and over the ridge, then we'll turn back. I'd never forgive myself if I went off without proving that there is or isn't a rabbit waiting right there for me to get a shot at. Why I'd be the laugh of all rabbitdom."

"You sound like you think they know you are

after them."

"Ahh, Muscles, that they do. Else why do they hide themselves whenever I am around. Everybody else can see them and hunt them around here, but whenever I come around...Not a one to be seen...Sure they know I'm after them. And I won't rest until I get one and prove they aren't so smart."

"Well, alright," surrendered Lieutenant Muscles Morgan. "I think you're rabbit nuts, but just over that next ridge." She looked directly at the Captain. "Besides," she said. "They are only having hot dogs for lunch at the chow hall."

Lieutenant Morgan fastened the rifle sling over her shoulder, gritted her teeth, pushed a tumble weed from her path and followed the Captain on toward the next ridge. The Captain's face, hidden from Lieutenant Morgan, wore the smile of the conqueror.

Jim left the mess hall and walked very quickly to the Ships Service. Once inside he winked at Ilene, who had been smoothing out the fur of her new angora sweater set, then went on into the telephone booth, deposited his nickel in the proper slot and dialed his number. There was no answer to the telephone's constant ringing on the other end. He waited. But still no answer. Slowly, but definitely he hung up the receiver and sat looking disappointedly at the mouthpiece of the instrument.

"Maybe the party you called isn't at home," came the soft feminine voice behind him.

Jim turned quickly, and his look of despair turned to happiness as he looked up into the face of Nadine Long. "Nadine," he said. "I was just calling you."

"And you looked so disappointed when you couldn't get me. I thought you were going to call me when I saw you come in here."

"I told you I'd call."

"I got the afternoon off, so I came up to see you."

"I only have fifteen minutes, then I have to get back to the torture chamber."

"Fifteen minutes. At least I can be near you for the fifteen minutes. Let's go someplace where we can be alone."

Jim took her soft hand and led her from the Ships Service. A few minutes later they settled down on the green grass in the shadow of a large oak tree, high on the mountain side behind the hospital. Jim put his arm around her shoulder and the warm bare skin which came around her off the shoulder blouse, felt good to his touch. Nadine looked into his eyes and smiled softly. He lowered his face to hers and the kiss, he knew then, he had been waiting for all morning.

When the kiss was over and their breath came hot in their mouths, Nadine pulled back to look at him. "Do you love me, Jim?"

Jim was silent.

"You don't have to answer. I love you."

"Nadine, you know how I feel about you."

"I know...." She kissed him lightly on the corner of his lips and permitted her tongue to tickle him there for some time while her hands made ringlets of his hair. "I know you love me, and you will tell me one day soon. I know you will, darling."

"Sun's hot today."

"I was yesterday, too," she smiled. "You know you have beautiful hair. Too straight though. I'll put it up in pin curls for you some night."

"Over my dead body," replied Jim.

"You haven't much time left."

"I know."

"Will I see you tonight?"

"Do you want to?"

"Of course I do."

"Where shall I meet you?"

"The Rusty-Dusty?"

"Okay, only I hope Hashmark won't be there. I see enough of his ugly face around the office in the daytime. Sure hate to see him at night too. I guess he means well, but I wish he'd ease up in the office and keep his nose out of private business."

"I know."

"Top is a very peculiar type of fellow. You never know just what he is thinking. One minute

he's mad, the next he's patting you on the back wanting you to do him some favor."

"I wish I had what that girl of yours, back home, seems to have," cut in Nadine.

"What?"

"You!"

"Don't worry about her. I've told you that she is completely out of my life now."

"You have told me. I listen. I forget. I wonder. Sometimes, I don't know just what to think, Jim. I wish I did know what the whole score is, and not just what the surface looks like. In certain aspects you're just like the ocean Jim. One sees the top and says, my look at all that water, but they never even think, there is a Hell of a lot more water between the surface and the bottom than there is just what they see on top. Do you get what I'm talking about, Jim?"

"I guess so."

"I see your surface. The only difference with me and the guy looking at the water is, I know you have depth, and I wish I could fathom it....You, I mean."

"Nadine, let's not bring up the past, huh?"

"Okay, Jim, if that's the way you want it."

"She was swell, I...but you're different."

"You mean, I know what the score is."

"I suppose so, in a way."

"Jim, I only know one thing...I love you. I love you very much. I love you with all my heart."

"It sounds theatrical, Nadine, but thanks." Jim smiled at her to assure her he wasn't making fun of her.

Nadine caught his smile with hers then pressed his head to hers and their lips met. Jim started to slide his arm around her waist again, but Nadine ushered his hand upwards, upwards to encircle her round, firm breasts which were heaving against the loose, white, off the shoulder blouse.

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Barry Brown Remembered

by Mark Carducci

In researching the lives of the Ed Wood players for *Flying Saucers Over Hollywood: The Plan 9 Companion*, I came across an article in the collection of Forrest J. Ackerman, written by a young fan in the late '60s. His name was Barry Brown.

Barry Brown eventually became a successful actor, starring with Jeff Bridges in Robert Newman's first feature *Bad Company*. More than one critic described Barry, quite rightly I think, as reminiscent of the young Jimmy Stewart. Brown also worked in television and also co-starred in Peter Bogdanovich's *Daisy Miller*. But he was, and remained even after he began acting, an inveterate fan of B-film actors, their lives and especially their deaths.

Barry compiled a morbidly titled column, called "Necrology," for Calvin Beck's *Castle of Frankenstein* magazine, a running list of detailed obituaries of known and sometimes almost forgotten film folk. He wrote a shocking and memorable article about Bela Lugosi in that same magazine, exposing some of the details of Lugosi's drug addiction to horror film fans too young to recall the unfortunate events themselves. He also contributed to "Who's Who On Screen."

According to a friend of Barry's, Bill Warren, author of "Keep Watching the Skies," Barry was a B-film fanatic. Bill recalls Barry proudly showing him a photo from his collection, of actor Rondo Hatton relaxing candidly in the Hatton backyard.

As it progressed, Brown was unhappy with his career as an actor. Making *Daisy Miller* had been a miserable experience for him, due to Peter Bogdanovich's much-publicized and constant catering to his par amour Shepherd. The film's icy critical and boxoffice reception only depressed Brown further.

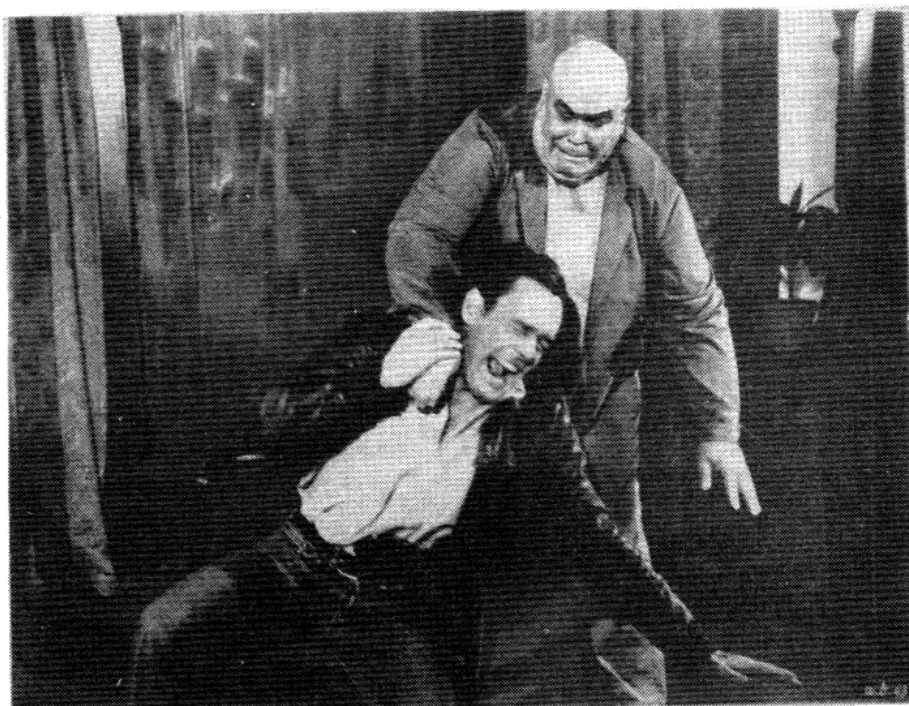
Director Joe Dante, another friend, reportedly wanted to give Barry the Bradford Dillman role in *Pirahna*. But by then Brown had developed a drinking problem that had begun to get in the way of his craft. He does appear in a small role in *Pirahna*, as a police officer, looking not very well.

The article that follows, penned by Barry, is about Tor Johnson. It was through this piece that the precise location of the house Bela Lugosi exits at the beginning of *Plan 9* was discovered, enabling *Flying Saucers Over Hollywood* cameramen to go there. Though the draft is a bit rough in places, Barry, as you will see, had a disarming and gentle writing style (one might apply the same adjectives to his acting) that reveals the depth of feeling he had for fringe Hollywood. His piece on Tor is reproduced here, as a tribute to both Tor and Barry himself. Sadly, troubled by demons one can only speculate about, he committed suicide in the summer of 1978 and is no longer with us.

♦♦♦♦

Tor Johnson

by Barry Brown



Tor Johnson and Myron Healey in *The Unearthly*.

When I was growing up in San Jose, California and got hooked on horror films, it wasn't the classic ones that got me, but the dime-a-dozen quickies turned out by the smaller companies (Hammer Pictures were just beginning to hit the market). To my mind, *Creature From The Black Lagoon* was a classic horror film, but the ones I remember enjoying the most (excluding my favorite, *Invasion Of The Body Snatchers*) were *The Creature With The Atom Brain*, *Tarantula*, *Invasion Of The Saucer Men*, *The Undead* and *The Black Sleep*. My favorite horror stars were Bela Lugosi and, believe it or not, Tor Johnson.

Looking back, I realize Johnson must have made an extremely strong impression on me because I can't have seen him in more than three or four films of the period. But his work seems as familiar to fantasy film buffs as that of Dwight Frye and George Zucco, so I suppose I wasn't the only one cowering in my seat.

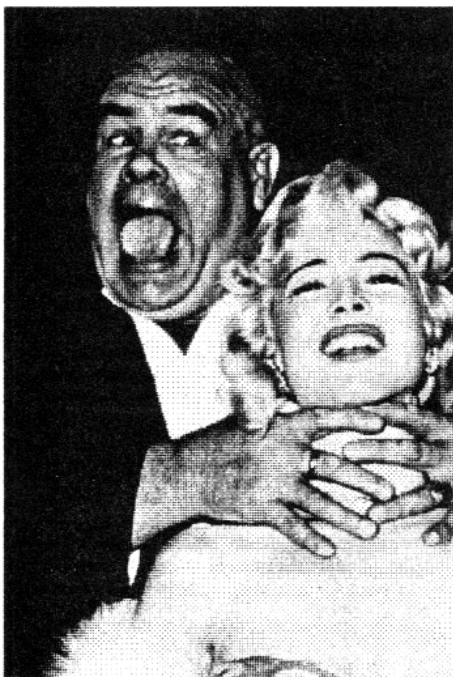
Actually, there wasn't any problem at all in just noticing him. He must have weighed well over three hundred pounds. In the five or six films in which he was prominently featured, he had little or no speaking lines and played more or less the same character—a lobotomized, murderous zombie of a man, a sort of half-witted half-wit.

Information on Johnson is difficult to come by. When he died, he was survived by his wife, two sisters, a son and five grandchildren. I wasn't able to locate any of them. Screen Actors Guild was no help. They were looking for his survivors, too, probably in regard to residuals checks. What I have been able to glean from various sources follows.

Tor Johnson was born October 19, 1903 in Sweden, the son of Karl J. Johansson and Lovissa Petersson. He was twenty-five when he arrived in California in 1928 and he moved to Los Angeles County three years later. This move to California may have had something to do with the rheumatic heart disease from which, his death certificate says, he suffered for the last forty years of his life. He was married by this time to one Greta Johnson. When or why he shortened his own name to Johnson I couldn't determine, nor could I find out when he became a wrestler, which is how he supported himself when he wasn't doing films. It must have been before 1935, however, for in that year he played a wrestler named Tusoff in his first billed film appearance, the Paramount release of a W. C. Fields movie, *The Man On The Flying Trapeze*, that concerned the vicissitudes Fields experiences in simply trying to reach the wrestling match.

He popped up occasionally in various films over the next fifteen years, not always with his name listed in the credits. Some of his appearances I discovered from ferreting through his advertisements in issues of the Academy Players Directory. He can be seen in a Columbia musical, *Swing Out The Blues* ('43); an Olsen and Johnson comedy, *The Ghost Catchers* ('44); an Abbott & Costello epic, *Lost In A Harem* ('44); and *The Canterville Ghost* ('44), a film that starred Charles Laughton as a 17th century ghost.

Though he did a few films in the early fifties (most notably, *Abbott And Costello In The Foreign Legion*), his real winning streak came in 1956. Between '56 and '59, he did seven films and, if one counts *Carousel*, in which he had a tiny role, all but



Above: Tor hams it up with the White Ghost, Valda Hansen

Right: Patricia Blake surrounded by Lon Chaney Jr., John Carradine, Tor Johnson and two other mutants from *The Black Sleep*.



one of them were fantasy pictures.

The Black Sleep of 1956 saw him as the blind, grunting product of an experimental failure on the part of Dr. Joel Cadman (Basil Rathbone) who was searching for a way to bring his wife out of the affliction used as the film's title. In *Bride Of The Monster* ('56), he was Lobo, the unfortunate result of Bela Lugosi's atomic experiments. *The Unearthly* ('57) continued the typecasting. This time the mad professor was played by John Carradine. He was searching for the secret of eternal youth and Johnson was a living casualty.

He actually had a few lines and a sane character for the first few minutes of *Plan 9 From Outer Space* ('59), but he quickly became the walking dead experimental guinea-pig for Plan Nine (an alien force's program providing for the resurrection of the dead to take over the Earth). Unfortunately, another film he did that year, *Night Of The Ghouls*, has never been released. It was the third picture Johnson did for Edward D. Wood, Jr., whose work makes a Jerry Warren film look like a gem in comparison.

His last film, *The Beast Of Yucca Flats*, first distributed in 1961, was still in release in 1972. The director-screenwriter was Coleman Francis, who'd also acted in Ray Dennis Steckler's 30-minute film, *The Lemon Grove Kids Meet The Green Grasshopper And The Vampire Lady From Outer Space*. Francis died January 18, 1973. The co-producer of *Beast*, Tony Cardoza, also played a small part. In this film Johnson played (what else?) the beast. He had first billing in this tale of a man who, having been caught in a nuclear explosion, becomes a monster. Johnson wore no makeup.

In his last years, Johnson made a few personal appearances at supermarket openings, etc. in his Lobo costume from *Bride Of The Monster*, a leather vest and a ragged pair of pants. He also made an appearance on an old episode of Groucho Marx's *You Bet Your Life* quiz show. As a contestant, he was dressed in a suit. Groucho asked Johnson to scare him. Tor raised his hands above his head in

preparation for the well-known Lobo pounce and roared. Groucho scurried away.

He retired to his home at 15129 Lakeside Street in Sylmar, a community 30 miles outside of Los Angeles. He began to develop a more serious heart condition in 1968 and died May 12, 1971 at

10:14 a.m. in San Fernando Valley Hospital in nearby San Fernando. Cause of death was listed as congestive heart failure. He was 67.

Services were handled by J. T. Oswald Mortuary in Los Angeles and he was buried at Eternal Valley Memorial Park in Newhall, California. ■



Top Right: Make-up man Harry Thomas touching up Tor Johnson's make-up on the set of *Night Of The Ghouls*.

Johnny Legend's

SWITCHBLADE REUNION SLASHES SOUTHLAND: "Robbie Lee, This is your knife..." were the immortal words spoken by director Jack Hill as he passed over the sacred blade and reunited ROBBIE LEE and JOANNE NAIL, the notorious stars of the '70s classic, *Switchblade Sisters*, a film which tops the All-Time-Favorites list of such diverse personalities as Joe Bob Briggs and Quentin Tarantino. This ultra-prestigious event took place in July at the home-museum of art collector/author/curator of the absurd, and childhood chum Glenn Bray, and was luckily captured on video for all the world to see. Mister Hill and I recently acquired the original negative for *Switchblade*, made a pristine, state-of-the-art tape transfer, and the whole shebang (feature plus the reunion) is now available on (who woulda guessed?) Johnny Legend Video. You can already find this masterpiece (along with *Spider Baby* and *Pit Stop*) at most Tower Video outlets and specialty shops, or see info elsewhere in this issue.

ROMMA LOMMA DING DON (WHAT THE HECK, LET'S GO HIGH TECH!) The incredibly insightful company Gametek has just landed the CD-ROM rights to both *Spider Baby* and *Switchblade Sisters* and both will probably be available before you even have a chance to catch your breath... this one's a done deal.

LITTLE SHOP OF HORROR COMICS: Roger Corman's all new Cosmic Comics is poised for a big-time breakthrough, starting in April of 1995 with the titles *Death Race 2020* and *Bram Stoker's Burial Of The Rats* (based on film feature starring Maria Ford and Adrienne Barbeau) with future releases of *The Wasp Woman* and other comics based on Corman classix old and new... By the way, the Corman Tribute C. D. I mentioned in my last column is now slated for late October release, along with my new double-A-side 45 of "I Was A Teenage Caveman" b/w "Witch Doctor," all on the Worrybird label out of Atlanta.

WHOSAYS WE AIN'T FAMOUS YET? Tome Rainone's tour-de-force rock video of the Ramones' "Substitute" has been enjoying "heavy" rotation on the Beavis & Butt-Head Show (popular on one of those cable channels). Watch closely and you'll see me in Spike Jones original canary-yellow pinstripe suit along with such luminaries as Bill Smith, Michael Berryman, Melba Toast and Rudy Ray Moore!!!

FORGOTTEN GOLD (MY GIRLA GANGA NO ES LOCA): For those of you who think there's nothing new under the sun, get ready for another twenty-five or more Untamed Videos in my Something Weird Video series. Some of the cranium-cracking recent discoveries include *Girl Gang* — a totally staggering "lost" film from the fifties featuring gang bangs, explicit heroin-in-the-leg footage, etc. starring Timothy Farrell; *Runaway Girl* starring Jock Mahoney and Lilli St. Cyr (!) in a delinquent girls opus enhanced with mid-60's nudie footage; *She-Man* — a cross-dressing melodrama from Bob "Porky"s" Clark that gives *Glen Or Glenda?* a run for it's money; and — this time I'm not kidding — absolutely the worst movie ever made: *Broadway Jungle* directed by Phil "Robot Monster" Tucker!

TIME FOR GOTOTWIST: JIMMY "NO LEE" MASLON just directed the "Ultra Twist" music video for The Cramps — a tune about Madame Olga's "School of Twist" (an S & MTWist School, natch) from the new LP "Flame Job" on the Warners subsid Medicine label.

THE PEOPLE VS. OLEN RAY: Whoops, I mean "People Vs. O.J.," a hastily assembled NBC special which aired recently on a Friday night featured none other than our good friend, the unsinkable Fred Olen Ray. Naturally, who else but Fred would have had the uncanny foresight to have starred Kato Kalin in his own feature, *Inner Sanctum II*, cleverly filmed before any of the Simpson tragedy occurred. On the special, Mister Ray was captured in a moment of leisure on the grounds of his estate, flanked by his award-winning canines, to speak candidly of his involvement with the young Kalin.

CULT AROUND THE CLOCK



Also coming your way from Mister Ray: *The Incredible Sixty-Two Foot Centerfold* courtesy of Concorde/New Horizons starring Ross Hagen & Russ Tamblyn: *Vampire Vixens From Venus* with International Pent House Pet of the year Leslie Glass: *Fred's Freaks*, a private collection, were rented for Disney's new *Shaggy Dog* feature; Fred cameoned along with loveable Lawrence Tierney in *Dark Red*; on the literary front, Fred is presenting *Weird Menace*, cover by Jim Danforth, first story by Hugh B. Cave...

TALK ABOUT FAMOUS: On the heels of the NORTHERN EXPOSURE Pencil Neck Geek episode, the legendary fashion plate, Classy FREDDIE BLASSIE was flown to our nation's capitol by the DISCOVERY CHANNEL to star in an all-new "Geekumentary" tentatively titled "BLASSIE GOES TO WASHINGTON". As we go to press, this one's in the can and being edited under the watchful supervision of lifelong geekophile JEFF KRULIK. At another posh event, Blassie was formally inducted into the newly-christened WRESTLING HALL OF FAME in a star-studded ceremony hosted by his time honored buddy, REGIS PHILBIN. The E CHANNEL recently re-ran the astounding DAVID LETTERMAN segment on "MY BREAKFAST

WITH BLASSIE" featuring Fred and Andy Kaufman.

FILMFEST FEVER RAGES WORLDWIDE: For those of you who think this entire "Cult Movies" scene exists in some kind of isolated videobubble, guess again. This past year has been a hotbed of theatrical celluloid insanity, some of the highlights being: April — Jack Hill and I were guests at the First Annual Arizo-Film Festival with the opening Friday and Saturday devoted to luxurious screenings of *SPIDER BABY*, *PIT STOP*, *BIG DOLL HOUSE* and *SWINGIN' CHEERLEADERS* in a gigantic, 1000-plus seat auditorium with discussions, lavish luncheons, etc. Kudos to fest director DURRIE PARKS for having the guts and vision to bring such progressive programming to an otherwise barren blip on the cultural landscape. Mister Hill then went on to premiere the films in Munich, Berlin and Italy where he was the featured speaker at the prestigious "BITCHES AND BEACHES" festival. A few months ago in Minneapolis, under the stewardship of JOEL "I'm no Jewell" SHEPHERD, the University Theatre presented the first-ever "GUTTER TRASH" festival, featuring such diverse fare as *TEENAGE GANG DEBS*, *GORE GORE GIRLS*, *SATAN'S BED* and a rousing finale in a real drive-in with a surprise showing of RAY DENNIS

STECKLER's brand new print of *INCREDIBLY STRANGE CREATURES*. Mr. Steckler and ERIC CAIDIN also tested the local waters in Cash Flagg's home turf with a one-night mini-fest in Vegas. Here in Hollywood, Mr. Caidin and I, along with CULT MOVIES Magazine, hosted a series of in-person tributes to LAWRENCE TIERNEY, BEVERLY GARLAND, ROBERT CLARKE, HARRY NOVAK, COFFIN JOE and ROGER CORMAN (who was joined by guests JONATHAN HAZE and LEO GORDON.) A huge, month-long AIP festival at the Nuart in West Los Angeles featured appearances by Corman, Jack Hill (introducing COFFY), and the maestro himself, SAMUEL Z. ARKOFF, who appeared numerous times. On the East Coast, Harvard University presented a massive, sold-out in-person tribute to DORIS WISHMAN! MIKE VRANEY, ROGER CORMAN, and COFFIN JOE were the featured celebs at a recent "Terrorfest" in Brazil. In July, I "took" Berlin with an ambitious live-concert and film program in an innovative new "outdoor theatre" (just like a drive-in only you walk in) which prompted national TV coverage — imagine THE SMUT PEDDLER, it's 'n all, running continuously on CNN or MTV for several days; that's exactly what happened...

Still to come in '94: *BIG APPLE BRACES FOR SPIDER BABY PREAM!* Starting September 30th at the Cinema Village in the heart of Manhattan. This adventurous theatre is also working on several more sleaze/cult/drug/rare horror type fests for the near future. The Drexel Theatre in Ohio is prepping for it's annual HORROR-FEST around October 21 & 22 which this year will feature *SPIDER BABY* and *VAMPYR*, *DAUGHTERS OF DRACULA*. "BABY"-boomers can also watch for the webbed wonder on Nov. 18, 19 & 20 at the University of Minneapolis, and on a double-bill with *FREAKS* on Oct. 21 & 22 in San Jose.

RICHARD "BLACK FIST" KAYE, who (for those of you keeping track) was manager of my first band THE SEEDS OF TIME back in 1966, has just completed "TURN OF THE BLADE" which is in some sort of revolutionary new 360 degree all-enveloping 3-D sound format (Not to be confused with Sensurround, dolby digital, spectral or surround sound)...

TIME FOR GO TO TOR: A recent passing which has received very little media attention was that of my old neighbor, the Son of Tor, KARL JOHNSON. A fascinating tidbit that has not been mentioned is the fact that, in his final years, Karl was quite thin and sported a long beard!

GUESS WHO'S COMING TO PIN HER? Watch out for my new femme fatale protoge, surprisingly named *SPIDER BABY*, coming soon to a wrestling arena or cobweb near you...

That's all for this time. And just remember, if at first you don't succeed — Bleed, Bleed BLEED!!! VAYA CON DIABLOS...

-JOHNNY LEGEND-

The Hollywood Rat Race

by Edward D. Wood, Jr.
Published by St. Martin's Press
New York.

St. Martin's Press, to coincide with the release of Tim Burton's great movie on the life of Ed Wood, has unearthed a long thought to be lost manuscript by Ed, entitled *The Hollywood Rat Race*. *Rat Race* is Ed Wood's instructional manual on how to make it in Hollywood (or how not to make it depending on your point of view).

Wood concentrates on making it as a performer, using anecdotes about his favorite stars and character actors to make his point along the way. He also includes chapters on writing and producing films ("How to make a cheap picture and fail"). *Rat Race*, in essence, is the closest that Ed Wood came to writing an autobiography, written, of course, in that delightful Wood style.

Ed also manages to work in his obsession for Angora sweaters and women's clothing throughout the manuscript. "... you are headed for Hollywood where you will try for a career in front of the magic eye of the movie camera. You the young lady (the young men may visualize your own packing) will have your suitcases full of your high school best; sweaters (even a good, fluffy pink, angora one that cost plenty) blouses, skirts and most of all the frilly formal wear you wore at the senior prom." and "One walks the streets of Hollywood today and can hardly tell the boys from the girls; the long hair; the velvet skirts, the capri pants and high-heeled boots... even some of the 'boys' have taken to wearing light pink lipstick while the girls have eliminated that cosmetic... Hollywood is not as the fan magazines attempt to paint... You'd be surprised how many of the boys prefer girl's clothes and the girl's who prefer boy's clothes! And I mean big stars... directors... producers... writers!!!"

Ed tells a lot of good stories about Bela Lugosi, many of which appeared in abbreviated form in Robert Cremer's biography of Bela Lugosi in 1976. Ed also talks at length about Bela Lugosi's great talents as a character star: "Bela Lugosi is probably one of the best examples of the character man who made good in his career as well as making a great deal of money in the process. To the day he died he was always in demand, and I mean this factually because it comes very close to home. Opened on page six beside his bed as he died, was my script *Final Curtain* (ironically enough titled) which we were about to film."

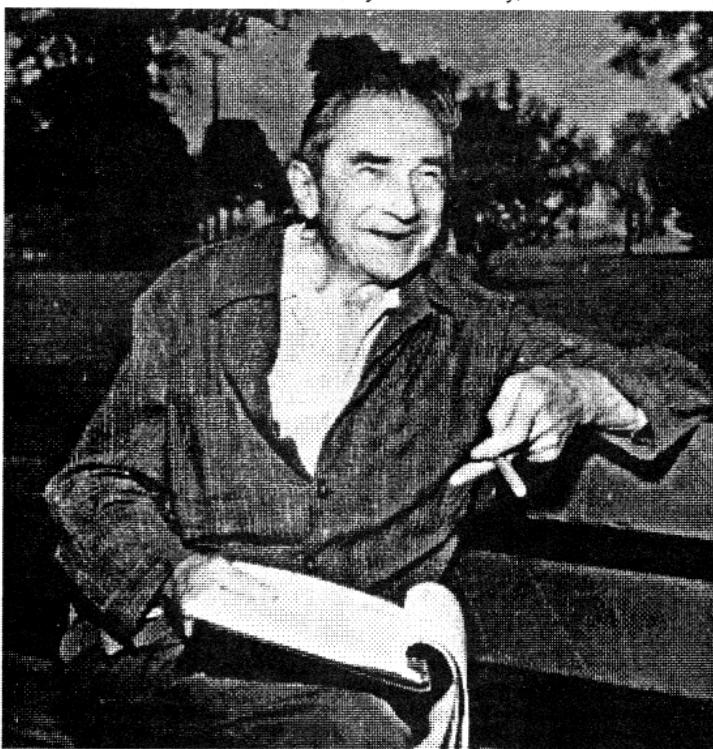
"A personal weakness stole his fortune and his life, but never his talents. In his seventies he created the horror character on stage in *Arsenic And Old Lace* in far-off St. Louis. In the same year, with myself as the writer he devised a night club act for the Silver Slipper in Las Vegas, playing to record breaking audiences and was held several weeks over the original run... He also set a new record at theatres for his personal appearances."

"A character man, you bet, but a name which will be remembered as long as there are movies or television." *Hollywood Rat Race* is a must have for any Bela Lugosi fan.

Ed really goes into a tirade about sleazy film producers (he calls them Mr. Sleazy) and warns young actors and actresses against doing sex films. "Once you see the film you'll want to vomit..."

wonder how in the world you could have sunk so low! And mark my words...that film is going to be around a long time after you're gone (but then it won't matter to you any longer."

A really strange twist on the usual casting coach is put forth by Ed in the manuscript. "In this Producer's(?) office, he always, conveniently, has



Ed Wood's long-lost book *Hollywood Rat Race* contains a wealth of information about his friend Bela Lugosi, seen here reading Wood's script *The Ghoul Goes West*.

a radio booth, so that he can hear your voice recorded under radio like quality. He wants you to enter that booth and record for him. After all, you can't deny him this. He's the Producer; hasn't he got the pictures on the wall to prove it?

"The radio booth is soundproof. You can scream your head off as he pulls the Angora sweater up over your head, but no one can hear you... You have to have witnesses to prove anything... He'll see that you take plenty of time (after it's over and his lust is pleased) to get properly dressed again. He won't let you leave the office looking ragged. It might reflect on him."

"That radio booth at the outer edge of his office is a fact — and as an extra — your screams; squeals; dialogue and his panting could well be recorded. I'm sure he'll sell you a copy of the tape if you would like it. He's made quite a business out of that kind of thing too... So buy the tape, in later years you might want to relive the incident...?"

Ed's love of films and actors really comes through in this manuscript. "I worked hard, even promoted the money myself for my first film. I've 'loved' films since I was an usher, collecting throw-away stills from the ash cans behind the theatre. I guess — even before that, back to a time when my dad bought me, as a small child, an old handcranked Keystone movie projector and a few comedies."

He also talks quite a bit about his own experiences as a filmmaker ("Via Yellow cab, the major cab company in Los Angeles and the surrounding area, you arrive at the studio — an old store on Larchmont Blvd — a few spotlights in a hastily erected living room set — an ancient 16mm movie camera of one sort or another, and a vintage sound

recorder.")

In addition to his advice on Hollywood, Ed also throws in some odd promotional "plugs" for some of his favorite businesses (like Yellow Cab company above). Other "plugs" are for the Hollywood Wax Museum and the Brown Derby restaurant. "I can guarantee you, you'll see actors/actresses of renown at the Brown Derby in Hollywood, if you're there at the proper times. (Criswell and I even talked to the Three Stooges and Pat Butram the last time we were there.)"

The chapter on "How To Produce A Cheap Picture And Fail" gives Ed Wood's opinion on the movie *Robot Monster* and its producer/director Phil Tucker (even though Ed mentions neither by name it's clear what he is referring to.) "There was a film, in the days of 3D, which only because it was 3D, played the Paramount Theatre in Hollywood (one of the major houses). The picture lasted one performance, then was scrapped until television came in. It claimed to be a science fiction piece... The only science (or fiction) about it is the fact that it came into being at all."

"And this so-called Producer is still around Hollywood today taking backers' money for the same 'crap' which never even gets the glory of one performance."

Hollywood Rat Race is recommended highly for anyone interested in Ed Wood, Bela Lugosi, or low-budget movies in general. While it's not much good as a guide to making it in Hollywood, it sure is entertaining as hell. Ask for it at your local bookstore or write to St. Martin's Press in New York for more information.

I'll finish out this review with a few more enticing quotes from the late, great Ed Wood's *Hollywood Rat Race*:

"I've never, for instance, known an ending to my own stories — it's more fun that way."

"...—Panties, warm with the heat of your body; Sweaters of an expensive and usually of a furry nature, are a hot item to these characters..."

"Check my films! And check some others! And then realize — How easy it is to make a cheap picture and fail."

"There are perverts in all walks of life who can read implications into any given subject."

"The atomic bomb. It didn't just happen."

"I must confess, there was a time in 1951 when I first started in the film industry, when I was opinionated."

"The girls will find it easier to get some measure of a break than the boys — if they are not too particular. There is always openings for topless waitresses, sales girls and naked watusi dancers."

"Don't hurry... Oblivion will be there eventually."

"...the swimming pool in which we were baptized Baptists, happened to be owned by a lovely Jewish family."

"No one can teach you to write. You either do, or you don't. Oh, I suppose a certain command of the language is advisable."

"The road to any dream, to make that dream a reality, is a tough road. Dreams can only become a reality if you face facts. Face them squarely and realize all those others around you have their dreams also. Perhaps you may have to dream a little deeper!"

— Reviewed by Buddy Barnett



Stuff to read

By Michael Copner

For years there have been fanzines devoted to the Italian "Sword & Sandal" films, but I don't believe anyone's done a complete book on the subject. Until now, that is to say. *Muscles, Myths, and Movies* by Steven Flacassier is a book-length checklist of muscleman epics with titles such as *Atlas In The Land Of The Cyclops* and *Triumph Of Hercules*.

Stephen has defined his subject matter as consisting of 75 films (although many more titles are listed, due to the common practice of re-titling these films.) He's created his own unique four-tier rating system to help explain each film, plus gives a listing of cast and director, a brief plot summary, followed by his own insightful commentary on the films. You can see the progression in the careers of Steve Reeves, Mark Forrest, Ed Fury, Alan Steele, Gorgon Scott and many others, and the vastly varying quality of these mini-epics and get

a real overview of the genre as it developed from 1958 to 1969. The book is rather inexpensively printed (it reminds me of our own first effort on Lugosi a few years ago!) with no color on the cover, but it's the information inside that makes it valuable. It's \$6.95 (plus postage) and you can order from: Rabbit's Garage, 202 Basswood, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007.

Another unusual treat is *Lionheart In Hollywood*, by actor/producer Henry Wilcoxon, with Katherine Orrison. It's billed as "Life and Times with C. B. DeMille," and covers Wilcoxon's 30-year association with the legendary DeMille. Beginning in 1933 and culminating with DeMille's death in 1959, Wilcoxon, together with collaborator Orrison, works from diaries, letters, business journals, scrapbooks, tape recordings, telegrams, and one-of-a-kind photographs from his personal collection to re-create DeMille, his times, and his films, giving a first-hand account of the casting, direction, and production of some of the biggest and most successful movies ever made. Although Mr. Wilcoxon died in 1984, through this book he has passed on a wealth of knowledge that is as entertaining as it is enlightening. The book is 384 pages, with 60 photos; \$42.50 from Scarecrow Press.

If you're a Godzilla fan, you probably know about *G-Fan Magazine*. If you don't know about it, it's worth checking out. The new issue is 63 pages of news, photos, reviews, and trivia about — Godzilla! Also the related toys, model kits, comics and other collectibles that have been created over the years. Try one! *G-Fan* is \$3.00 per copy in the U.S. and Canada, and \$5.00 overseas. Order from;

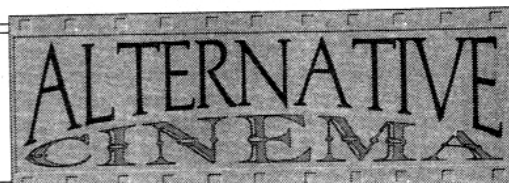
Daikaiju Enterprises, Box 3468 Steinback, Manitoba, Canada ROA-2A0.

Many film fans who felt that *Filmfax Magazine* abandoned their original audience a few years ago, will be delighted with the new product. The first eight issues were sheer paradise, with in-depth research on Corman films, Ed Wood, and foreign sci-fi. But when they ran *Blondie & Dagwood* articles twice in one year, you knew a change was in the wind. Recently things started looking up when *Filmfax* brought in Ted Okuda as the new editor. A few issues back I picked up a new *Filmfax* that had interviews with both Butch Patrick and Al Lewis — Eddie and Grandpa Munster!!! I knew that things had turned around at *Filmfax*. If you've been staying away, it's time to check out *Filmfax* again; it just keeps getting better.

Did we save the best for last? *Monsterscene Magazine* is just wonderful — a must-have item. The new issue has a spectacular cover painting by Basil Gogos, the artist who painted the best of the old covers for *Famous Monsters*. His subject matter this time is a moody portrait of Chris Lee as Dracula, a fitting subject since the magazine includes an article on the Hammer Dracula, along with specials on Japanese vampires, a profile on film legend Bob Burns, a slew of video reviews, and much much more. This is a deluxe publication all the way, printed on heavy slick paper and featuring interior color. *Monsterscene* is published quarterly by Gogo Entertainment, 1036 South Ahrens Avenue, Lombard IL 60148. Send them \$5.95 plus \$1.00 for postage, and you'll receive the greatest treat in your mailbox that you've had in years. You'll love *Monsterscene*! ■



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X: THE UNKNOWN monthly newsletter opens the Seven Seals: UFO's, Mind Control, Conspiracy Theories, Sex, Spies, Weirdness and the Paranormal. Send \$1.50 for a sample issue or \$15 for a year subscription to: Patrick O'Donnell, PO Box 14, Matawan, NJ 07747.

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WANTED: Any & all stills, 8x10's from the exploitation movie *PIN DOWN GIRL*, aka *BLONDE PICK UP*. Also any & all lobby cards & photo displays of same, a roadshow film debut in 1955. Murray M. Jackman c/o Seamen's Club, Inc., 8985 Columbia Road, Port Canaveral, FL 32920.

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MOVIE & VIDEO REVIEWS

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DeLaurentis, it can only be guessed that he was trying to cover all the bases and make as many people happy, and as much money, as he could. It's sort of "Scooby-Doo meets Herschell Gordon Lewis." It would have been nice to have gone one way or the other. The word "vampire" isn't used in the film, and the characters aren't all that vampire-like. They steal some blood from the women at the beginning, but that's about as close as they come. Check out *Hercules In The Haunted World* for better beefcake against vampire adventure.

Gordon Scott plays his role far too seriously, but it doesn't hurt the film much. He's trying to rise above the material, but the movie is too much of an adventure to let that happen. It's near the start of his entry in the series, so he still has most of his Tarzan muscle, but it's going a little soft. The fight scenes are far too choreographed to be real, but he handles them well. It's when he's destroying things, like ceilings and walls, that Scott looks like he's having some real fun.

Where most of these movies go out of their way to make sure you see every button and zipper on their monster, this one hides them in quick cuts and shadowy sets. The sea monster at the beginning is seen so briefly, and not even mentioned by anyone else, that it's curious that they even spent money to use it. Only the insect creatures that attack Astra get any real screen time, but it's hard to see because of the lighting. It's not clear who the stand in was for Scott in the final fight. The build on the stand in was at least up to Scott's and does match well.

Reviewed by Stephen Flaccasser

The Flintstones

The *Flintstones*, a Steven Spielberg (*Jaws*, *Jurassic Park*, *Schindler's List*) presentation, is one of many motion pictures based on popular television series that recently have been released. However, it is the only such film that is based on more than one television series.

The fact that *The Flintstones* is based on *The Honeymooners* is made all too obvious by John Goodman's (*Roseanne*, *Arachnophobia*, *King Ralph*) portrayal of Fred Flintstone. It is so similar to Jackie Gleason's portrayal of Ralph Kramden that Fred comes across not as funny, but instead as dated.

Also dated is Rosie O'Donnell's (*Sleepless In Seattle*, *A League Of Their Own*) portrayal of Betty Rubble. Betty's cute little giggle and financial ineptitude may have seemed girlish back in the 1960s, but in the 1990s, they come across more as sexist.

The work done for *The Flintstones* by Jim Henson's Creature Shop is superb. The wooly mammoth shower, the lobster lawnmower, the boar garbage disposal and so on all fit perfectly into the world of Bedrock. However, the computer-generated images provided by Industrial Light and Magic, the special effects company founded by George Lucas (*Star Wars*, *American Graffiti*, *THX-1138*), are a little disappointing. Both Dino and the *Flintstones'* nameless saber-tooth cat seem more than just a little too fake.

Rick Moranis (*Ghostbusters*, *Little Shop Of Horrors*, *Honey-I Shrunk The Kids*), who plays Barney Rubble, gives an unremarkable, but adequate, performance.

Elizabeth Perkins (*Big*, *About Last Night*), isn't likeable enough as Wilma Flintstone. Conversely, Kyle MacLachlan (*Dune*, *Twin Peaks*) isn't dislikeable enough as Cliff Vandercave, the embezzler who tries to frame Fred.

Perhaps the greatest shortcoming of *The Flintstones* is its screenplay. Fourteen different screenwriters and eighteen different television gag writers were brought in to work on the script over a nine year period, but the draft that ended up being used relies too much on sight gags to entertain.

Along with all of the sight gags, there are a number

of commercial tie-ins which provide *The Flintstones* with its more memorable moments. Betty's credit card is destroyed by a sales clerk in Marshy Fields, brontoburgers are sold at RocDonald's, the news is announced by Jay Leno (*The Tonight Show*) on the Cave News Network, the playground to which Wilma and Betty take Pebbles and Bam Bam is called Jurassic Park and so on.

While Pebbles and Bam Bam are playing in Jurassic Park, a pterodactyl flying overhead deposits a large amount of droppings on the playground. This is meant to be funny, but is instead a little repugnant.

Brian Levant's (*Happy Days*, *Mork And Mindy*) direction is adequate, but little more. It shows that his intention was to produce a cartoon featuring real actors instead of a standard motion picture based on a cartoon.

Sharon Stone (*Basic Instinct*, *Sliver*, *Total Recall*) was asked to play Miss Sharon Stone, the seductive secretary who is assigned to Fred when he is made an executive, but a scheduling conflict prevented her taking the part. So, Halle Berry (*Strictly Business*, *The Program*, *Boomerang*), a former Miss World contestant, was chosen for the role. Her performance is a good one, but it is perhaps just a little too true-to-life for a film like *The Flintstones*.

Elizabeth Taylor (*Cleopatra*, *Who's Afraid Of Virginia Woolf*, *Cat On A Hot Tin Roof*), who agreed to appear in the movie only after receiving assurances that the proceeds from its premier would go to benefit The Elizabeth Taylor AIDS Foundation, gives a much more tongue-in-cheek performance as Pearl Slaghoople, Fred's overbearing mother-in-law.

The musical highlight is the B-52s' rendition of *The Bedrock Twitch*, a song that was written for an episode of the original cartoon series. The rest of the score, which is made up of orchestral music by David Newman and songs by Big Audio Dynamite, Crash Test Dummies, "Weird Al" Yankovic and a number of other artists, is generally uninspired, but *Was Not Was' Walk The Dinosaur* and *Hit & Run Holiday* by My Life with the Thrill Kill Kult are both interesting tracks.

Of the individuals who worked on the original cartoon series, only Jean Vander Pyl, the woman who provided Wilma's voice, and producer William Hanna appear in the film. Mr. Hanna is seen briefly during a meeting in the boardroom of the Slate Construction Company, and Ms. Pyl is seen dancing behind Dino in the conga line led by Pearl Slaghoople.

Rosanna Norton's costumes generally are very good. However, some of the formal wear seems a little too well-tailored for the stone age.

Comedic actor Harvey Korman (*The Carol Burnett Show*, *High Anxiety*, *History Of The World - Part I*) is heard as the bird which takes dictation from Fred. Despite the fact that its role is not all that large, the so-called dictabird does stand out because of the holier-than-thou attitude Mr. Korman imparts to it.

Comedian Jonathan Winters (*The Jonathan Winters Show*, *Viva Max*, *Moon Over Parador*) puts in a brief appearance as the leader of the lynch mob that goes after Fred when he unknowingly signs documents that call for a large number of construction workers to be fired. Although Mr. Winters' dim-witted character is identical to the one he has been playing for decades, the prehistoric context in which it is seen makes it seem to fit in perfectly.

John Goodman has stated that he is reluctant to return as Fred in a sequel. However, he has not completely ruled out the possibility. If a sequel is made, it would be a good idea for more attention to be paid to telling a decent story. That way, it might be possible for those watching the movie to develop some concern about what happens to the characters in it.

Reviewed by David Milner

Van Beuren Cartoons

A group of intelligent, individualistic entrepreneurs at Bosco Video have undertaken the monumental task of researching, copyrighting, editing, and performing all of the other necessary hardships too vivid and too technical to mention in extracting cartoons of the '30s from the ancient archives of television in order to satisfy our eyeballs which so long have yearned for something unusually different. Different these cartoons are!

They sure don't make cartoons like they used to...and maybe it's good that they don't. The material contained in these volumes of the video collection series, starring Mutt and Jeff, Little King and Cubby Bear, is stuff that we today may find a little shocking that they would even think of creating and airing yesterday. Perhaps the cartoons back then were controversial, not so much in that they poked fun at particular groups, but in that they featured such things that were considered controversial in the real world. When I was a kid growing up in the '60s and '70s, I didn't even know what homosexuals were, much less that they existed. Mutt and Jeff in one of the videos features male and female transvestites, with the exaggerated puffy lips and goo-goo eyes, the goofy, gay earrings, and the broken wrists, etc. I couldn't believe what I was seeing when I peeked at this video. It's like nothing I've ever seen in any cartoon from the 1950s to the present! It is surprising that the ACLU has not contested these videos. controversy also concerns itself in the manner in which these '30s cartoonists portrayed the minorities with their usual stereotypes...the Chinese with protruding front teeth, the Blacks with inflated lips, etc.

The entire Mutt and Jeff series, particularly the scene that depicts a bowl of split pea soup and a grandfather clock serenading each other makes me ponder that perhaps these cartoonists were dropping acid.

The Cubby Bear video is a "cuter" cartoon, mainly because of his delightfully misadventurous situations. Two strange ingredients that also make it difficult to ascertain why these cartoons weren't controversial in the '30s is the prevalence of lust and violence. Cubby does a heck of a lot of love making and I myself found it a trite disturbing to have seen someone in an episode getting his head severed with a saw (Three Stooges...eat your heart out!)

Cubby is a clever cuss, entrenched with immense charm, who always gets the girl, who conquers the hearts of "old hags" with his violin, and who usually outwits his foes with brains and fists. How one stupid, little teddy bear can beat the garbage out of grizzly Pirates, wild hippos, and savage Indians, is beyond me, but hey, in a cartoon anything can happen.

Again, after viewing these intriguing videos with their abstract flavor and deep surrealism, it's not too far-fetched to hypothesize that these cartoonists' veins were not devoid of substance. Some of this stuff makes no sense whatsoever - dancing skeletons, a storm cloud playing the piano that's not really a piano, but a castle, a girl's face popping out through the mouthpiece of a telephone, an arrow flying through the air and picking up a passenger to ride on it, and Adolf Hitler singing like an opera singer - there's no logic!

These cartoons are nostalgic, creative, entertaining, but at the same time, seemingly offensive.

The non-offensive stuff probably inspired future cartoonists, such as Hanna-Barbera, Warner Bros, Disney, AAP, and the incomparable Tony Mostrom. I personally have seen very familiar antics and characters in *Aladdin*, *Heckle and Jeckle*, *Popeye*, and *Bugs Bunny*. Furthermore, Disney's *Goofy* strongly resembles that of one of Cubby's characters.

Bosco Video certainly has done their homework and has masterfully restored these cartoons to their original format, leaving us with a crisp, sharp picture in glorious black and white. The quality is astounding! These videos are still available on VHS and can be obtained by writing to: *Cult Movies* - see our ad in the classifieds section.

Reviewed by Ed G. Lousarian

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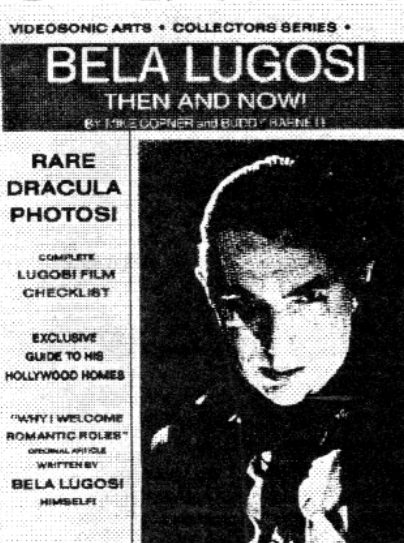
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